

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020

**Report Title**

Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge: Young Carers' Update

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Sally Hodges, Interim Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

**Report Author(s)**

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Assistant Director, Early Help, Family Engagement and Business Support.

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The Children and Young People's Services Strategic Commissioning Manager submitted an update on the Children's Commissioner Take Over Challenge 2019 that was scheduled for Cabinet on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. This was subsequently deferred to the September 2020 Cabinet for more work to be undertaken.

This report provides an update on the actions that were able to be progressed from June 2020 during the current Covid-19 lockdown restrictions period.

Updates have been provided against each of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) recommendations.

Since June 2020, the Assistant Director for Early Help, Family Engagement and Business Support was assigned to lead this work and has convened a fortnightly Task and Finish Group to expedite action and to oversee process.

## **Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet note the updates within the report.

## **List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Children's Takeover Challenge Scrutiny Review Report  
Appendix 2 Initial Equality Screening Assessment  
Appendix 3 On-line Survey conducted July 2020

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

## **Council Approval Required**

No

## **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge: Young Carers' Update

<b>1.</b>	<b>Background</b>
1.1	<p>On 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019 Rotherham Youth Cabinet and Rotherham Young Carers, supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, participated in a Children's Commissioner's Takeover Day Challenge. The theme of the takeover was linked to Rotherham Youth Cabinet's manifesto aim of:</p> <p><b><i>"We want to work alongside the Young Carers' Council to ensure young carers have the same opportunities as adult carers in accessing free activities whilst in their caring role"</i></b></p>
1.2	The aim was to seek parity with adult carers in terms of opportunities for free or discounted leisure activities and a further consideration raised by young carers regarding respite from their caring responsibilities and having fun.
1.3	Members of Rotherham's Young Carers' Council, with support from the Youth Cabinet, delivered a presentation which was then followed by a focused question and answer session.
1.4	In preparation for the presentation the young people had researched the offer to Young Carers in other parts of the country particularly in relation to support initiatives that supported Young Carers to participate in sport and leisure activities that provide respite from their caring role.
1.5	Following on from the event, a Children's Takeover Challenge Scrutiny Review report was produced and distributed in September 2019.
1.6	According to Barnardo's, as at July 2020 the service is currently in contact with 70 Young Carers in Rotherham.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The recommendations made by the review in April 2019 are set out below.
2.2	Opportunities to progress recommendations have been hindered by the outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent Government 'lock-down' restrictions from 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2020, which further disrupted the ability to make progress.
2.3	This update sets out what has been achieved against the original recommendations since July 2020.
2.4	<b>That RMBC and partners engage with young carers during 2019 to develop a priority list of activities that young carers in Rotherham would be interested in participating in.</b>
2.5	Barnardo's Young Carers' Council originally planned to consult with young carers across the borough. However, what little data came back is now twelve months old.

2.6	<b>Update:</b> On the 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 the Assistant Director, Early Help, Family Engagement Business Support convened a Task and Finish Group of partners to expedite the original recommendations. As a result, a Young Carers' on-line survey was developed with Barnardo's and this was shared during an on-line Carers' meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2020.
2.7	Barnardo's have agreed to send the survey to all known young carers in Rotherham, along with a stamped address envelope (SAE) to encourage maximum engagement in the consultation.
2.8	Initial results from participants in the on-line consultation can be found at Appendix 3.
2.9	Once all the stamped addressed envelope results are back with Barnardo's a list of activities will be created as per the original OSMB recommendation.
2.10	To make up for lost time, the Assistant Director for Early Help, Family Engagement and Business Support has been liaising with partners and colleagues across the Council in readiness for the consultation findings.
2.11	Much of what RMBC might offer is already free to children and young people, but agreement has been made that this will need pulling together as a discreet 'Offer' for Young Carers. Young Carers already qualify for the Rother Card discount scheme on leisure so there is already quite a lot they can access at discount.
2.12	Early ideas for inclusion include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pantomime ticket allocation (or discount)</li> <li>• Discount at Rother Valley Country Park (cycle hire, water sports, zorbs)</li> <li>• Discounted café offers in our cultural venues (e.g. free slice of cake with every drink)</li> <li>• Free music lessons at the Rotherham Music Hub</li> <li>• Open water swimming lessons at Thrybergh</li> <li>• Discounted athletics stadium passes, swimming, and leisure centre usage.</li> <li>• Places Leisure have also pledged support.</li> </ul>
	Rotherham United Community Sports Trust have agreed to become part of a bespoke offer with a view to facilitating a Young Carers' football group and access to their 'Youth Space' at the New York Stadium for respite, peer support and 'chat and chill' type activities.
2.13	Young Carers will have the opportunity to attend selected fixtures at Rotherham United at a reduced rate of £5 per ticket once football matches are able to resume.
2.14	<b>That RMBC and partners work together to develop an improved and sustainable offer of discounted access to leisure activities for young carers from 2020</b>

2.15	<b>UPDATE:</b> This work is now progressing. (See 2.2.1) A Young Carers' Task and Finish Group was established in June 2020 to progress the OSMB recommendations above. In addition, the group has looked at the Rothercard eligibility.
2.16	Current eligibility for Rothercard, which offers discounts to various activities and products across the borough, does not include children and young people under the age of 16.
2.17	Colleagues in the voluntary and community sector, and Culture, Leisure and Tourism have come forward with a range of discounted activities that will form the basis of the Young Carers' Offer.
2.18	<b>That in developing this improved offer RMBC and partners also consider support for young carers to travel to leisure activities, including concessionary fares and travelling safely.</b>
2.19	South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE) have previously supported Young Carers across South Yorkshire and there is currently a Junior Travel Concession for 16-year-olds and under across the SYPTTE area.
2.20	<b>Update:</b> An initial review of a concessionary travel offer for young carers suggests that such a scheme would be very costly as it would need to be rolled out across the region. Currently there is no funding to implement or sustain such a scheme.
2.21	At present a young carer can travel free with the person they are caring for, if that person has a Disability Travel Pass with a carer element. The carer would not be able to travel for free if travelling on their own.
2.22	Currently concessionary travel passes are in place for under 16's and 16 to 18-year olds in South Yorkshire entitling them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel for only 80p per single journey on all buses and trams in South Yorkshire.</li> <li>• Half price travel on all trains in South Yorkshire.</li> <li>• Discounted 1, 7 or 28-day tickets for young people.</li> </ul>
2.23	Due to the further research that would need to be done to measure the average number of journeys young people take, the concessions that are already in place and the recognition of the additional yearly costs to providers, it is proposed that this recommendation has been thoroughly explored and is now complete.
2.24	<b>That RMBC and partners agree clear eligibility criteria for young carers for future initiatives.</b>

2.25	<b>Update:</b> All children and young people who have been assessed and identified as a young carer by Barnardo's Young Carers service will be issued with a letter confirming eligibility.
2.26	It is recommended that this action is now complete.
2.27	<b>That the new offer for young carers is communicated and well publicised by the Council, partners, and schools.</b>
2.28	<b>Update:</b> A review of current publicity and promotional materials was undertaken in July 2020 by the Task and Finish Group. The current Service information is aimed at professionals. A leaflet was designed by children supported by Barnardo's and copies have been distributed to schools, G.P. practices and other agencies.
2.29	The Task and Finish Group has proposed creating a short video designed by children and young people featuring them discussing the needs of young carers and what support they would appreciate.
2.30	Early Help Voice and Influence workers have offered to support and progress this.
2.31	<b>That information and publicity for any current activities that are open to both adult and young carers is updated by the end of 2019 to make it clearer who is eligible. Ideally this should be in a well promoted single point of access, so it is easy for everyone to find the information.</b>
2.33	<b>Update:</b> This recommendation will now be taken forward in line with 2.4 above
2.33	<b>That work continues through the Carers' Strategy Action Group to identify other young people who are young carers and for partners to consider ways to support young carers aged under eight who do not meet the criteria for the Young Carers' Service.</b>
2.34	<b>Update:</b> This group is led by Barnardo's. It reconvened on the 14 <sup>th</sup> July, having not met since January 2020. Staff are working to a Young Carers' Service Delivery Plan, a contingency plan developed to deliver the service remotely during Covid-19 restrictions.
2.35	Support offered to Young Carers and their families during the pandemic includes contact made with all families currently awaiting a service, to check on their wellbeing and to ensure they are aware of the availability of community support options such as Food Banks and assistance if required.
2.36	Whilst progress has been hampered, practitioners have maintained regular contact with the children and young people Barnardo's work with to ensure they are supported and are not isolated.

2.37	Barnardo's practitioners have been able to continue structured work through regular telephone support, sending out resources and worksheets via post or e-mail.
2.38	Easter activity packs were sent out to young carers and their siblings at the end of March and feedback from parents was positive.
2.39	Staff have assisted families, sourcing food parcels to be delivered, ensuring children are still receiving free school meals (where appropriate) and liaising with schools and other children's services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young carers and their families.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Options considered and recommended proposal</b>
3.1	The outbreak of Covid-19 has hampered progress made against some of the review recommendations and this is likely to be the case for some considerable time.
3.2	Critical to developing any of the recommendations is the need to work directly with Young Carers and Voluntary and Community Sector Partners, such as Barnardo's and Rotherham United Community Support Trust, Higher Education and Alternative Education providers and South Yorkshire Transport.
3.3	This work will be progressed virtually where possible to ensure recommendations continue to be progressed.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Consultation on proposal</b>
4.1	Consultation with the wider cohort of Young Carers is now underway.
4.2	A new survey was developed with Early Help and Barnardo's on July 2020 and issued to Young Carers during an on-line meeting. See Appendix 3.
4.3	This survey is being followed up with a paper-based copy being sent to Young Carers along with a stamped addressed envelope.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision</b>
5.1	Timescales were not identified in the original report. The Assistant Director, Early Help, Family Engagement and Business Support was assigned to make progress on the original actions and recommendations.
5.2	A Working Group was established in June 2020 and is Chaired by the Assistant Director, Early Help, Family Engagement and Business Support and meets bi-weekly with a requirement of weekly email updates.
5.3	1 <sup>st</sup> July - Young Carers' Group are now working with the LAC Council.
5.4	1 <sup>st</sup> July - CYPS Commissioning contacted to provide current Service Specification and Performance Monitoring of Barnardo's Young Carers' contract.

5.5	1 <sup>st</sup> July - SYPTE contacted requesting a date for the next Young People's Transport Group meeting so the Young Carers can raise questions around concessionary travel.
5.6	Customer Information and Digital Services contacted to progress the opportunities for Rothercard.
5.7	17 <sup>th</sup> July - Assistant Director Culture, Leisure and Tourism contacted to contribute to the development of a Young Carers' Offer.
5.8	17 <sup>th</sup> July - Rotherham United Community Sports Trust contacted to contribute to the development of a Young Carers' Offer.
5.9	The Young Carers' Group was reconvened on the 14 <sup>th</sup> July. The meeting was held virtually.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of the Section 151 Officer)</b>
6.1	Financial implications cannot be quantified until the improved and sustainable offer of discounted access to leisure activities for young carers has been determined and agreed with partners (including concessionary fares) and implications from review of Young Carers Service to support young carers is completed.
6.2	There are no direct procurement implications associated with the recommendations detailed in this report.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)</b>
7.1	There were no legal implications arising out of the original report and there are no legal implications arising from the update and recommendations contained in this report.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Human Resources Advice and Implications</b>
8.1	No HR implications
<b>9.</b>	<b>Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults</b>
9.1	The intentions of the annual Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge are to impact positively on Young Carers by giving them more access to leisure activities and giving them respite from their caring role.
<b>10.</b>	<b>Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications</b>
10.1	The intentions of the Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge and the subsequent OSMB recommendations are intended to provide parity with adult

	carers and create opportunities for free or discounted leisure activities for Young Carers in Rotherham.
<b>11.</b>	<b>Implications for Ward Priorities</b>
11.1	The proposed activity described in this report will potentially have a positive impact on all Wards in the borough.
<b>12.</b>	<b>Implications for Partners</b>
12.1	There will be implications for partners in relation to the development of the recommendations, in particular the Young Carers' Offer.
<b>13.</b>	<b>Risks and Mitigation</b>
13.1	Risks include the continued impact of Covid 19 restrictions which could delay or limit progress. On-line safety is mitigated through the use of safe and secure platforms.
<b>14.</b>	<b>Accountable Officers</b>
	David McWilliams, Assistant Director Early Help, Children and Young People's Services.

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	29/04/20
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	29/04/20
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Bal Nahal	29/04/20

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