

Ref Code	Organisation Name
2022-05-YC07	Carers Plus Yorkshire
Visit Date	Visited By
12 th September 2022	Victoria Southwell
Overall aim of the funding	
To ensure that schools within Carer Plus Yorkshire's local footprint are fully equipped to support young carers. This will involve co-producing a flexible partnership plan with schools to ensure the impact of care is recognised, addressed, and minimised.	
Background to Organisation and governance	
<p>Carers Plus Yorkshire (CPY) is a registered charity that was established in 1995. It is a Carers Trust network partner. CPY employs 48 members of staff and has 9 current volunteers. A number of staff also have caring responsibilities. A board of 8 Trustees meet every 4-6 weeks and have a range of skills that include education, marketing, finance, legal skills, and business development. 7 of the current Trustees have direct experience of caring.</p> <p>A Strategic Plan is in place for 2022-27 setting out strategic aims for the organisation across four key areas – a commitment to communicate, continuing financial stability and resilience, innovation alongside embedded services and organisational management. This strategic plan has been developed in the aftermath of a merger with another smaller organisation, the process of which required a review of the business plan for the future. Trustees were involved in initial discussions that relooked at CPY's values and objectives with one of the key outcomes being the number of values reducing from 15 to four. The board were very keen to own the plan so had ongoing involvement as they document was developed.</p>	
Leadership and expertise	
<p>At the assessment I met with Elizabeth McPherson (CEO), Claire Robinson (Business Development Manager and Deputy CEO) and Michael Hunt (Chair of Trustees).</p> <p>Elizabeth joined CPY in 2002 as a project worker and over time worked her way up to the CEO role. Her experience prior to this was within the statutory and private sector. She describes herself as an open and transparent leader with an open-door policy but who is unafraid to make difficult and unpopular decisions. She believes in working in collaboration where possible and is passionate about developing people.</p> <p>Claire has been with CYP for just over six years and joined as a Young Carer Worker. Her background is in education and fundraising, and she has a wealth of knowledge about the needs of the carers CYP works with. She has contributed to the growth of the organisation significantly in the time she has been there, with the support of a Development Grant to fund the creation of her current role.</p> <p>Michael has been a Trustee for eight years and Chair for the past five. His background is in Local Authority commissioning and social care.</p>	
Aims and Activities	
Carers Plus Yorkshire enables unpaid carers to be heard, to feel empowered to improve their own wellbeing and to make positive changes in their day to day lives. Core objectives are to offer independent, high-quality information, advice and support,	

represent the voice and needs of the communities they support, raise awareness of support available and work in partnership through meaningful collaborations with a wide range of other organisations.

CPY offers two primary services; 1) support for unpaid carers with 3 distinct services for young carers, young adult carers (up to the age of 30) and adult services. 2) My Neighbourhood Community based services which includes a home from hospital service, well-being and prevention services, employment and training project and a community support organisation supporting hardship and localised challenges in Ryedale only.

In 2021 CPY provided 1:1 support to 589 adult carers, 54 young adult carers and 133 young carers. Additionally, 4,529 people were supported through the My Neighbourhood Community range of services.

Safeguarding

CPY has a robust approach to safeguarding which is underpinned by a clear and comprehensive policy and appropriate training. All staff, volunteers and Trustees receive basic training with higher level training being a requirement for specific roles. This training is refreshed annually and delivered by an external consultant. The CEO is the named Safeguarding Lead in the policy and has significant knowledge in this area.

Safeguarding is an agenda item at all Trustee meetings and the Chair spoke knowledgeably about CPY's approach to safeguarding. Over the course of a year around 12-15 concerns would be escalated externally. Internal concerns are discussed at team meetings and extra support is offered to the young carer, a safety plan is also developed with them, and referrals made to other appropriate agencies.

Finances

Audited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021 show income of £864,755 against expenditure of £701,044 resulting in a surplus of £163,711 for the year, of which £79,647 was unrestricted.

The balance sheet shows net current assets of £410,536 with unrestricted reserves of £248,472. £45,000 was designated for costs linked to a merger with another charity. The reserves policy states that the equivalent of three months running costs should be held and this is currently being exceeded. Trustees review the levels of cash reserves quarterly.

Main funding is received from North Yorkshire Adult and Community Services through a core grant. This commissioned service is in place for another three years. Other funding comes from East Riding of Yorkshire Council, European Social Fund and Trust and Foundations such as Big Lottery, Children in Need and Co-Op Foundation. Budgets and funding predictions for 2023/24 and 2024/25 have significantly increased due to the merger with another carer's organisation. Due to the funding received through their commissioned service the majority of the budget has been secured for the period of the grant being requested.

Good financial processes are in place and the board has good oversight via budget reports presented at each Trustee meeting and income and cashflow projections for the coming two years regularly produced. Day to day finances are managed by the Office and Finance Manager who works alongside the Treasurer, who is a qualified accountant, and the CEO.

Current Situation and need
<p>Approximately 25% of the young carers that CPY work with miss school on a regular basis due to their caring responsibilities. Consultation with registered young carers also highlighted that 1 in 3 disclosed that mental ill health challenges their capacity to fully interact with school and 50% admit to masking their challenges as they don't want school or friends to know about their additional responsibilities. On top of this the pandemic hit CYP's young carers hard and their experience locally shadows the national statistics of 80% of young carers struggling to learn at home, to cope with the lack of school routine and experiencing an increased sense of isolation. Virtually all young carers who have been referred into CPY's services said that they received little support at the point of transition to secondary school or on to post-16 provision.</p> <p>CPY has been working alongside schools since 2014 but have struggled to become fully established in each school due to current resources. This has meant that they have been unable to consistently identify Young Carer Leads within the schools nor help them to develop an action plan for improvement. A dedicated resource would enable up to 11 schools to be targeted, some of whom CYP already work with. A school-based Engagement Officer would ensure that CYP can deliver a level of consistency across the schools which will mean the support needed to improve educational chances for young carers is not left to chance or postcode. It will look to address the inequalities in secondary school provision across the Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale area, support transition plans to be developed to and from secondary school and support school-based planning that develops a journey of educational change for school staff, governors, young carers, and their families.</p> <p>CPY places huge value in co-producing resources and projects with young carers and their experiences and needs will be at the root of the design of this work. They have highlighted that they would like more say in how they are recognised and supported, would like all teachers to have some basic understanding of carers and their roles, don't want to keep on repeating their stories and want their caring responsibilities to be considered in their education plans. They also flagged wanting more support for young carers in their transition from primary to secondary school. Underpinning this work will be a localised Schools Charter across Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale that is co-designed and produced by school staff, young carers, and their parents/carers. The charter will support an individualised response to creating a positive learning environment for young carers in the classroom and in the wider school community. A network of School Ambassadors who are young carers themselves and who are confident to advocate for others and have a voice within and beyond the school setting will also be recruited. A part time School's Engagement Officer will enable this work to be taken forward.</p>
Expected Key Achievements in Year 1
EKA 1
Increased access to relevant materials linked to young carers that are co-produced by young carers and teachers.
EKA 2
Increase in confidence and knowledge of issues impacting Young Carers/ Young Adult Carers and their educational needs within the school environment.
EKA 3
Visibility of young carers and their support needs raised within schools.
Request and Budget
CPY is requesting £57,770 over 2 years to employ a part time Schools Engagement Officer.

£29,535 in year 1 - £14,917 (salary), £4,995 (management), £3,423 (office & admin), £2,000 (project activities), £2,000 (travel & training), £1,300 (laptop & mobile phone), £800 (marketing) and £100 (recruitment).

£28,235 in year 2 - £14,917 (salary), £4,995 (management), £3,423 (office & admin), £2,000 (project activities), £2,000 (travel and training) and £900 (marketing).

Conclusion

CPY is a dynamic and ambitious organisation that is well run and boasts a huge amount of expertise. A previous Development Grant has helped them to grow through the creation of a Business Development Manager who also assumes the Deputy CEO role. This funding helped CPY to grow income as well as navigate the merger with a smaller carers' organisation. This role also was fundamental in helping CPY manage the pandemic and the challenges this created.

The work they do with young carers is well established and provides support that is both much needed and well planned. It builds on the key strengths of the young carer and develops their ability to cope in a very intentional way. Activities that are run are never run just for the sake of fun, but rather to provide fun and a valuable learning and development opportunity. This makes CPY an interesting organisation that clearly aims to get maximum value out of the work they do and the services they offer.

The geography they work in presents many additional challenges for young carers, magnifying isolation and lack of visibility. This is a vast area and even though there is a lot of affluence there are also pockets of deprivation that are often ignored or not recognised. Locally there are estimated to be around 2,000 young carers but CPY currently work with around 85 at any one time. So, there is a clear need and many more young carers out there than are currently receiving support.

The project itself is well thought out and designed but I was a little bit concerned that some of the groundwork to evidence the viability of the project wasn't as strong. This approach will undoubtedly work well in a school environment and other projects have shown it can be a key way of identifying hidden young carers, providing them with support and enhancing the ability of teachers to recognise and understand their needs. However, I was less convinced that there was the appetite for this project from schools locally as other projects seemed to have started with doors more open.

CPY's current offer to young carers is a comprehensive one that goes a long way in providing support. Whilst this project would add to that and certainly increase levels of support, I do feel there are other proposals where the need for the work is greater and our funding would make more of a difference. There would undoubtedly be value in funding this but if there are choices to be made about what applications to support, Trustees may want to consider if this is enough of a priority when compared to others. Additionally, the support previously provided through a Development Grant has enabled the Business Development Manager post to be created and this provides a significant resource in helping CPY to fundraise from other sources, something that some other applicants would struggle to do.

Cranfield Trust support through the Spark Programme was linked to mentoring a key member of the team who will be stepping up to a more senior role that plays a crucial function within CPY. Should this proposal not be supported I would recommend that this element of the ask still be provided as this will make a huge difference to CPY.

Recommended Priority Rating

Risk = Low

Difference to organisation = Medium

Priority = Medium

