

Ref Code	Organisation Name
2022-05-YC11	Sefton Carers Centre
Visit Date	Visited By
3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2022	Victoria Southwell (Zoom)
Overall aim of the funding	
To further build on the successes of and expand a young adult carers project to continue raising educational and well-being outcomes through the addition of a Young Carers Transitions Support Worker.	
Background to Organisation and governance	
<p>Sefton Carers Centre (SCC) is a registered charity that was established in 1994. It is a Carers Trust Network Partner. SHCC employs 41 members of staff and has 60 volunteers. A board of 6 Trustees meet every two months and have a range of skills that include children and young people, education, law, finance, social work and local authority commissioning. 50% of Trustees have personal experience of caring. A Finance sub group made up of the Treasurer, Head of Finance and CEO meet before each Trustee meeting to review finances and report to the board. There is also a Special Projects Committee that is convened when needed.</p> <p>A Strategic Plan is in place for 2021-23 and outlines five strategic objectives; Increase the influence that carers have over the services that affect their lives and those they care for, Identify and support the most vulnerable hidden carers, Diversify income sources and seek additional funding, Carers in Sefton are better able to manage the impact of caring and Continuously improve the Centre's management and service performance. The previous plan had been for five years but due to Covid it was agreed to develop a two year plan. Work will start on a new five-year strategy towards the end of the year and this will be developed and consulted on during 2023 and implemented in 2024.</p>	
Leadership and expertise	
<p>At the assessment I met with Vicky Keely (CEO), Andrew Deacon (Young Adult Carers Transitions Coordinator) and Pauline Coventry (Trustee and Vice Chair).</p> <p>Vicky joined SCC in 2017 as CEO but had worked with the organisation as a consultant on several occasions for the 10 years prior to her being appointed. Her background is in underwriting and setting up social businesses for charities. Vicky describes herself as organised, business focused and aware of the responsibility of running a charity. She likes to operate an open-door policy and places huge importance on planning, structure, strong communication and ensuring that everyone understands where they fit into the organisation and the role they play.</p> <p>Andrew has been with SCC for two years and prior to setting up the Young Adult Carer Transitions Service was a teacher. Pauline has been a Trustee for 12 years and initially joined as a representative of Sefton Health Authority. She is also a Trustee of two other charities so has extensive experience of how charities operate and was a carer.</p>	
Aims and Activities	
Sefton Carers Centre aims for a world in which the role and contribution of unpaid carers is recognised and valued and where carers have access to support and services of the quality they need to live their own lives.	

To achieve this aim SCC provides a range of services that include young carers support, a young adult carers transitions service, parent carer support, welfare benefits advice, an active older carers project, counselling and a Living Well project that focuses on improving health outcomes for carers. SCC owns a building that the centre runs most of its activities from. This is an old Job Centre that is at a high street location and close to multiple transport links.

SCC has around 11,000 carers registered with them, 900 of which are young carers and 100 young adult carers.

### **Safeguarding**

SCC has a comprehensive policy that is underpinned by the policies and procedures devised by Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership as well as the principles and guidance detailed in key Government documents. All staff undergo training via the NHS portal on joining SCC and this will be Level 1-3 depending on their role. This is refreshed annually. Volunteers also receive an introduction to safeguarding training module as part of their induction.

The CEO is the named Safeguarding Lead/Designated Officer and there are three other named staff members who make up the Safeguarding Team. These come from teams within each of the core areas of work that SCC focuses on – young carers, older carers and health and safety. This group reviews the outcomes of internal concerns on a six-monthly basis to ensure that appropriate support was provided. Annually around 36 internal concerns are flagged. SCC is part of Sefton MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) which is for all practitioners who need to raise a safeguarding concern externally and over the course of a year around 18 concerns will be escalated.

The policy is reviewed annually and Safeguarding features as a rolling agenda item at Trustee meetings.

### **Finances**

Audited accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 show income of £1,364,998 against expenditure of £1,297,826 resulting in a surplus of £67,172 for the year. Of this £41,112 was unrestricted.

The balance sheet shows net current assets of £628,538 and fixed assets of £577,281. General unrestricted funds show as £127,711 and designated funds of £236,500 once the book value of the charity's assets have been taken out. The designated fund mirrors SCC's reserve policy and is revised annually to reflect current operation requirements and circumstances. The reserves policy is based on maintaining three weeks operating costs to avoid potential cash flow implications of the late receipt of income, holding 5% of staff costs to minimise the risk to future income due to external changes and holding up to 8% of annual income to support business evolution and development opportunities. There is also a Buildings and Equipment reserve kept to enable the upkeep of the building and other operational assets.

Main funding is received from Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) through a mixture of grants and contracts. The current young carers contract was commissioned for three years plus two and SCC is about to begin year 1 of the plus two. The grant element of their funding is renewed annually and has been for many years. SMBC is currently reviewing this but is also in the middle of developing a new carers strategy so a change to funding will happen once the new strategy has been adopted. Other funding comes from Carers Trust and Big Lottery as well as rental income from their owned property.

Good financial systems are in place and are managed by the Head of Finance who oversees all financial processes and works closely with the Treasurer to produce management accounts and provides budget updates to SMT meetings.

### **Current Situation and need**

A 2022 national survey by Carers Trust, which included input from Sefton's young adult carers, presented some worrying stats. At least 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of respondents said their caring role resulted in them either 'always' or 'usually' feeling worried (36%), lonely (33%) or stressed (42%). These figures are even more concerning when viewed alongside other results that showed that 40% of respondents 'never' or 'not often' had someone to talk to at school about their caring role, and 52% of respondents 'never' or 'not often' got support from their school, college, or university in balancing study with their caring role.

Local data suggests that a higher percentage of young adult carers (20.2%) are out of education, employment and training when compared to other local young people (3.5%) in Sefton. Data also suggests that there are fewer than 100 young adult carers between the age of 16-18 in education in Sefton, which serves to highlight that schools, sixth forms and colleges are not identifying large number of young carers they have responsibility for. This most likely exacerbates the many barriers and challenges young carers face that stop them from not reaching their full career potential.

Transitioning from secondary school to sixth form or college can be extremely difficult for a young adult carer and this key period has already been identified by SCC as needing a specific focus. Two years ago, a new Young Adult Carer Transitions Service was established, and a Coordinator has over that time identified over 100 young adult carers needing support. He has also worked closely with schools, sixth forms and colleges (and begun work with local universities) to help them understand the needs of young adult carers better and provide better support and recognition. Due to this work, two partner colleges have achieved accreditation for carer support in the past 12 months and the caseload of young adult carers is growing.

Demand for this project outstrips current capacity so there is a need to expand the service. Whilst the support to schools in upskilling staff and approaches to working with young carers is vital there is a gap in providing young adult carers with sufficient support around their wellbeing and mental health. The current Young Adult Carer Transitions Coordinator has a background in the education sector, which supports the skill set needed to develop the direct work with schools, sixth forms and colleges. The addition of a Young Adult Carers Transitions Support Worker, with a background in child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing, will be able to plug that gap. It is anticipated this will lead to improved and positive well-being outcomes for young adult carers that enhance their education outcomes. The Support Worker will deliver a range of activities such as 1-2-1 sessions, group workshops, social and respite opportunities, education liaison, and partnership work. This will directly focus on education challenges linked to the caring role and enhance the work taking place with schools.

### **Expected Key Achievements in Year 1**

#### **EKA 1**

At least 70% of registered young adult carers will engage in a form of education, employment, or training to support their career aspirations.

#### **EKA 2**

At least 65% of registered young adult carers engaging with education or training will complete/pass their study programme/academic year.

EKA 3
At least 60% of registered young adult carers will make progress towards a new place of education, employment, or training to support their identified aspirations.
<b>Request and Budget</b>
<p>SCC is requesting <b>£55,192</b> over 2 years to employ a Young Adult Carer Transitions Support Worker (0.8 FTE).</p> <p><b>£28,088 in year 1</b> - £24,916 (salary), £1,500 (activities and overheads), £1,372 (supplies and services), and £300 (travel).</p> <p><b>£27,104 in year 2</b> - £24,916 (salary), £1,500 (activities and overheads), £388 (supplies and services), and £300 (travel).</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>
<p>SCC is a well-run and professional organisation that works in a challenging location. Due to neighbouring Liverpool and West Lancashire, it is both urban and rural and so suffers from a wide range of economic issues. The north of Sefton is considered more affluent but experiences issues with poor transport infrastructure and links. The south is more deprived and sees the associated health inequalities that come with social and economic challenges.</p> <p>The proposed project will fill a clear gap in the support that SCC is currently able to offer young adult carers. Their current offer to this group has been operating for two years and was seen as a pilot to test out support models for young carers above the age of 16 and support their transition into adulthood. The project has been well received and the take up has been high – 100 young adult carers are currently registered. However, the success of the project has also highlighted the fact that the current Young Adult Carer Transitions Coordinator is only scratching the surface in terms of what they can offer. The kind of practical help they provide in educational environments is important and has made a huge difference to many young adult carers, but there isn't the capacity to really make an impact with mental health and wellbeing – something that is seen as being crucial to really making a difference to a young carer achieving a positive education outcome.</p> <p>The fact that the funding being requested will fund a Young Adult Carer Transitions Support Worker means that the good work already being done will be amplified and complemented. By adding this extra element, the focus on transitions will be able to be developed so that more young adult carers will be reached. This will allow more resource to be put into working with year 11 pupils at secondary schools to help them to take their steps on to higher and further education as well as strengthening the current offer. There are numerous sixth forms, colleges and universities nearby that deeper work can take place in as well as around 150 local schools. So, there are numerous opportunities for the project to grow.</p> <p>The focus on young adult carers going through this vital transition stage of their life makes this an interesting application. There are now several projects highlighting this specific focus which will make for an interesting portfolio where there is the potential for lots of collaboration and cross fertilization of ideas.</p> <p>SCC recognises that one of its biggest weaknesses is the reliance on Sefton Council for the majority of its funding. This poses not only a risk in terms of not being awarded this funding in the future but also limits what additional work they can do without investing more in fundraising capacity. Whilst the relationship with Sefton Council is strong (SCC has essentially written the council's new carers strategy), the challenge of being able to develop additional services, outside of statutory commissioned</p>

support, is a big one. The project that SCC has requested support with as part of the Spark Programme will go some way to addressing this and help them identify income generating opportunities that sit outside of grants. Vicky's background in this area will be of huge value in taking this forward so support from the Cranfield Trust has the potential to add huge value to this grant overall. This is a well-planned application with lots of potential, therefore I would recommend support with a grant.

**Recommended Priority Rating**

Risk = Low

Difference to organisation = High

Priority = High