

Carers Trust About Time Grant Programmes

Executive Summary of the Evaluation Report

Phase 2: November 2015–November 2016



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Executive summary

“This has turned my life around – I feel like a completely new person.”

Young adult carer

“The project has changed the culture and ethos of the way the organisation works and has ensured not only that they regularly consult, but also that young adult carers are instrumental in researching, planning and implementing successful respite and personal development activities.”

Suffolk Family Carers

Introduction

This is the second phase of the evaluation of the grant programme that forms part of Carers Trust’s overall About Time programme. The funding programmes included within this phase 2 evaluation are:

- Time for Change Round Two.
- Take Action and Support Rounds Two and Three.

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Provide an overall evaluation of all data to assess the progress of funded projects against the aims and objectives of the About Time grant programmes and of the wider About Time programme.
- Conduct a qualitative study with funded projects to identify effective strategies and approaches for supporting and enabling young adult carers.
- Provide a focused evaluation of data derived from outcomes measurement tools designed to measure the extent of care undertaken, the positive and negative impacts of caring for young adult carers and changes in their lives as a consequence of taking part in the funded intervention.
- Evaluate the impacts of programme delivery and Carers Trust grant making processes on funded organisations.

Methodology

Analysis is drawn from the following sources:

- Monitoring reports for all funded projects.
- Carers Star data showing “distance travelled” for 118 young adult carers.
- An online survey sent to all Carers Trust Network Partners in receipt of funding, with six Time for Change partners responding (38% response rate) and 24 Take Action and Support partners (73% response rate).
- Visits to three funded projects, including interviews with six Network Partner staff and eight young adult carers.
- Interviews with four members of Carers Trust staff.

Overview

Carers Trust has provided funding of £1,113,646 to 53 projects across the two programmes (Time for Change Round Two and Take Action and Support Rounds Two and Three), providing support for around 2,000 young adult carers. This is largely in addition to the 1,805 people supported through Round One of the programmes and in line with the target of providing direct support to about 6,000 through the grant programmes over the three years.

The programmes had significant success in being able to identify and support young adult carers who were previously not receiving support, with 57% of young adult carers being new to the Network Partner providing support through the Time for Change programme and 42% new across the two programmes.

Outcomes for young adult carers

There is qualitative and quantitative evidence of the programmes contributing to improved outcomes for young adult carers across all seven domains of the Carers Star:

1. Health.
2. Caring role.
3. Managing at home.
4. Time for yourself.
5. How you feel.
6. Finances.
7. Work.

In addition, Take Action and Support Round Two projects appeared to be successful in contributing to increasing the number of young people in education, employment or training, with the percentage almost doubling after the project’s intervention.

Effective strategies for both programmes include one-to-one support such as mentoring, use of social media and online tools building confidence through participation in forums, developmental use of Carers Star for planning and designing training, and developing effective partnerships.

Both programmes focused on young people in transition and many had significant support needs, with one-to-one support being of particular value. This is challenging for Network Partners with limited resources trying to achieve both breadth and depth. Some Network Partners have a more structured approach to support, for example Carers Bucks allocates young adult carers to one of three levels of service provision. This appears an effective approach to allocating resources and other Network Partners may want to consider this segmented approach.

Changes in policy and practice

There is qualitative evidence of changes to policy and practice of external organisations, with specific examples of change in relation to young adult carers at a strategic level such as the review of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) guidelines in Wales.

Partnership is a key focus with 16 Time for Change Network Partners working with at least 53 partners and with education partners accounting for the largest number.

There is evidence of influencing and awareness raising within the further and higher education, health, employment and private sectors. There appears to have been more successful engagement with health sector organisations, particularly with GPs, than was evident in the phase 1 evaluation.

Benefits for Network Partners

For many Network Partners, the funding has brought longer-term strategic organisational benefits such as:

- Increased referrals and smoother referral pathways.
- Improved transitions for young adult carers between young carers services and adult carers services.
- A step change in strategic involvement at a local level and stronger links with potential commissioners and funders.
- Programme learning that has informed service delivery approaches and future strategic direction.
- The adoption of the Carers Star not only as a service delivery and outcomes measuring tool for their about time programme but for longer-term use within the organisation.
- Increases in skills as a result of working with this particular group, most notably use of social media.

Learning and development

Young adult carers have made a significant contribution at a programme and project level, both steering activities and participating in delivery. This has resulted in ensuring project activities are meeting needs, building capacity of Network Partners, influencing at a strategic level, and building confidence, skills and experience among young adult carers.

The evidence could be further strengthened by greater use of the Carers Star by Network Partners. Carers Star data would be particularly helpful for Time for Change projects that engage young people over a period of time. The lack of Carers Star take-up suggests that there is more work to be done to convince Network Partners of the strategic benefits of the Carers Star as an organisational asset for supporting young adult carers, learning and demonstrating impact externally, and thus as a key tool for sustainability. There may be scope for more sharing of good practice between Network Partners on the use and benefits of the Carers Star. Data on not in education, employment or training (NEET) status at the start and end of projects could also be more systematically collected. Carers Trust will encourage further submission of Carers Star data for the final evaluation.

Male young adult carers appear to be under-represented overall. However, several Network Partners appear to have been more successful in recruiting male young adult carers and it may be useful to share learning from these Network Partners more widely.

Camden Carers Service

Camden Carers Service uses Census data to inform its strategic planning and monitor the extent to which the young adult carers supported are representative of local demographics.

Challenges for Network Partners can be summarised as difficulty in engaging young adult carers, intensity of support required, staffing issues including recruitment, difficulty in engagement with external agencies, and project design including funding amount and length. Pressure on resources within the voluntary and public sector in general is the most commonly cited challenge to successful influencing. The limitations of the funding mean that capacity is not always sufficient to cover the range of demands posed by supporting young adult carers such as resource-intensive pastoral work, Carers Star data management as well as the more strategic influencing and partnership working.

About Carers Trust

Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, **unpaid**, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

We do this with a UK wide network of quality assured independent partners, through our unique online services and through the provision of grants to help carers get the extra help they need to live their own lives. With these locally based Network Partners we are able to support carers in their homes through the provision of replacement care, and in the community with information, advice, emotional support, hands on practical help and access to much needed breaks. We offer specialist services for carers of people of all ages and conditions and a range of individually tailored support and group activities.

Our vision is that **unpaid carers** count and can access the help they need to live their lives.



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