

Carers Trust About Time Grant Programmes

Executive Summary of the Evaluation Report

Phase 3: December 2016–October 2017



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Executive summary

This is the evaluation of the third and final phase of the Time for Change and Take Action and Support grant programmes that form part of Carers Trust's overall About Time programme. In 2013, Carers Trust was voted as The Co-operative Charity of the Year. The £6m raised from the partnership was used to support young adult carers. The About Time programme was developed, consisting of five related projects to address the broader issues that can lead to young adult carers becoming disengaged from society and feeling alienated from having long-term goals as a result of their caring role. The programme aimed to transform the lives of 20,000 young adult carers. The funding programmes included within Phase 3 of the evaluation are Time for Change Round Three and Take Action and Support Round Four.

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 for this evaluation is drawn from the following sources:

- Monitoring reports for all funded projects.
- Carers Star data showing distance travelled.
- Visits to three funded projects, including interviews with six Network Partner staff and two young adult carers.
- A consultation meeting with four members of Carers Trust staff.

Overview

Carers Trust has provided funding of £819,101 to 31 projects across the two programmes (Time for Change Round Three, Take Action and Support Round Four), providing support for 2,052 young adult carers. This is in addition to the 5,185 people supported through Rounds One and Two of Time for Change and Rounds One, Two and Three of Take Action and Support.

Outcomes for young adult carers

Over 2,000 young adult carers benefited from the About Time grant programmes in Phase 3 – 1,562 from Time for Change Programme Round Three and 490 from Take Action and Support Round Four projects.

Time for Change was highly effective in reaching young adult carers for the first time with 63% of participants being new to the organisations.

The demographics of participating young adult carers are not significantly different to previous phases. Females are slightly over-represented among participants, with about two-thirds being female. This compares with 51% from Census data (for carers aged 14–25).

Carers Star data for Time for Change show improved outcomes for 69% of young adult carers (based on data collected over two points in time for about 10% of young adult carers). The extent of change was greatest for Work and education, Time for yourself and How you feel, reflecting the focus of the programme activities. Health showed very little improvement.

Take Action and Support Round Four is seen as a flexible programme that enabled Network Partners to use a small amount of money in a creative way to achieve a range of outcomes. There is evidence from some Network Partners with Take Action and Support funding of young adult carers experiencing improved skills and confidence; increased positive mental health and a reduction in numbers of those not in education, employment or training (NEET). There was no systematic recording of outcomes for this programme of relatively small grants, although many projects developed their own tools for assessing outcomes.

Influencing and awareness raising

There is evidence of influencing and awareness raising, particularly within further and higher education. There has also been some influencing activity within the health and employment fields. Partnership work with schools and colleges appears particularly effective in identifying young adult carers and increasing access to support. One Network Partner developed a strategic relationship with a mental health trust and there is greater potential to develop partnerships with these providers.

Benefits for Network Partners

The main benefits of the grant programmes for Network Partners were:

- Increased reach to young adult carers.
- New and wider networks.
- Increased skills and experience to apply in developing future services.

Network Partners particularly valued the ability to provide holistic support under Time for Change and the flexibility of Take Action and Support, including the provision of small grants.

Capacity has been stretched to cover the range of demands posed by supporting this particular group of carers – the resource-intensive pastoral work, Carers Star data management as well as the more strategic influencing and partnership working. Network Partners have continued to report mixed views on the Carers Star, with some using it effectively to support young adult carers and demonstrate outcomes while others find it burdensome and not always meeting needs.

Effective strategies

Effective strategies in achieving outcomes for young adult carers are:

- Developing partnerships with external agencies to identify young adult carers.
- Systems for allocating intensive support.
- Use of social media and online tools to maintain engagement and develop peer support.
- Involvement of young adult carers in profile raising and peer support activities, which builds skills and confidence.
- Use of incentives such as gym membership or relaxation sessions to engage young adult carers.
- Use of referrals to other agencies to improve the range of support.
- Developing a good practice charter/accreditation for service providers.

The main challenges to achieving outcomes for young adult carers are:

- Identification of and consistent engagement by young adult carers.
- The extent of mental health issues within this group.
- The level of support required and the impact on resourcing.
- Engagement with external agencies.
- For Take Action and Support, specifically, the funding amount and length.

Limited resources within the voluntary and public sector in general is the most commonly cited challenge to successful influencing.

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 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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