

Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and SEND
Date:	18 th June 2024
Classification:	Part 1 (Unrestricted)
Key Decision:	Yes
Title of Report:	Young Carer Support Service
Executive Director:	Michael Marks
Report Author:	Tracey Schneider/Tasnima Quddus

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Following a review of the service offer to young carers, the Commissioning Team is seeking agreement to issue a contract variation under the current adults' carers' support commissioned service to include the addition of children and young people's carers' support offer, and for this offer to be in place until 31st March 2026.
- 1.2. As the current contract is due to conclude on 31 March 2026, work will take place with both adult and young carers and other stakeholders to develop specifications for competitive tender during 2025.
- 1.3. A Key decision is needed due to the total contract value after the variation is in place exceeding £250k and this service will be available across all wards within Southend on Sea.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1. Approve a 22-month contract variation to the current adults' carers service provided by Carers First to extend their service to include young carers support until 31st March 2026.

3. Background

- 3.1. There is currently a gap in the service offered to young people and there is insufficient capacity to support young carers in Southend.

- 3.2. Carers First provide Southend City Councils adult carers support service which is funded through the Adult Social Care Better Care Fund.
- 3.3. The current Carers First contract commenced with the initial term of 01st October 2021 to 31st March 2024 with an option to extend to 31st March 2026. The contract has been extended until 31st March 2026.
- 3.4. As part of the contract, the service provides adults aged 18 and over, with information, advice, and support along with delegated care act Carers Assessments. The service does not currently include young carers assessments or transitions assessments.
- 3.5. Carers First have delivered young carers service in Medway for 10 years and have recently begun delivering young carers service in the London Borough of Merton from April 2024. For these local authorities, Carers First provides:
 - Statutory age adapted assessments (young carers up to age 18)
 - Transitions assessment (age 16-24) to identify and support specific needs such as life skills, education and training, CV and employment.
 - Tier 1 Universal Support: providers short term, strengths/assets and needs based, building community support around the family.
 - Tier 2 Targeted Support: includes individual 1:1 and group work to build individual strength and resilience; addressing excessive or inappropriate caring.
 - Tier 3 Multi-agency Support: includes longer term multi-agency work; Early Help and Social Care and child protection plan involving whole family intervention.
- 3.6. Southend City Council currently employs a 'Young Carers Worker' who provides the Tier 3 support as mentioned above (linking in with social care team and early help through multi-agency support, linking Carers First with social care). Their role will continue to support young carers through actions such as working with Family Support Practitioners/Social workers to identify and refer young carers to Carers First, complete home visits with young carers and their families, maintain contact with schools, young carers groups and Carers First.
- 3.7. With the addition of the Childrens young carers service, Carers First will be able to offer the Tier 1 and Tier 2 support service (as mentioned above).
- 3.8. Included in the tier 1 offer is a website, online support, and advice service plus 1:1 support can be offered to young people. With the addition of tier 2 offer in combination with tier 1, young carers assessments and transitions into adult carer assessments, group support will be included in the offer.
- 3.9. Carers First as part of this additional contract variation will be able to have dedicated workers completing statutory age adapted assessments for young carers up to the age of 18 and also transitions assessments for those aged 16-24 years old. Carers First will be working towards an online support group offer in addition to the assessments. Carers First will also be linking in with Southend Council young carers worker to maintain the contact with social care workers for young carers who require early help support.

4. Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1. To widen the offer to young carers, providing online and in-person support, information, advice and guidance meeting the requirements of regulators.
- 4.2. The service will also be able to offer young carers assessments and transitions assessments with the general view to support young people transition from children's and young people's service and help to navigate adult social care services smoothly as the service will be working across the two social care teams.

5. Other Options

- 5.1. The other option would be complete a tender exercise to select a provider in a competitive process. This method would however be lengthy, taking a minimum of 6 months to complete a tender process and when considering the costs of the service alongside the costs related to a procurement activity the outcome would be more costly. The urgent nature of putting in place this provision makes this the best value/only option, a contract variation would be a quicker, short-term alternative which can be implemented until a full tender exercise can be completed.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The cost to include Young Carers Tier 1 and Tier 2 Support service is £51,413 per annum. To bring the service to an end in alignment of the Adult Carers Service ending on 31st March 2026. £94,257 would be the cost to cover the 22-month period between June 2024 to March 2026.
- 6.2. This cost is a new spend and will be funded via the Childrens Directorate Improvement Budget.
- 6.3. As part of the process to review options, Strategic commissioners liaised with neighbouring local authorities to compare costs of similar commissioned services. It was evident from conversations; the cost is higher at other local authorities compared to what is being offered by Carers First to include as an addition to the current contract. Strategic commissioning team also met with Children's social care team and Carers First to discuss the options available.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. The Children and Families Act 2014:
 - This Act significantly strengthened the rights of young carers under the age of 18.
 - The Act aims to assess and support children and young people to prevent them from taking on excessive or inappropriate care responsibilities.

- Additionally, it recognises the need to improve young carers' transition to adulthood.
- The Act emphasises the importance of understanding young carers' rights and support needs.

7.2. The Care Act 2014:

- The Care Act supports carers aged 18 and above.
- It focuses on assessing and meeting the needs of such carers and their families.
- The Act ensures that carers with eligible needs receive appropriate support and that their well-being is safeguarded.

7.3. The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015:

- These Regulations specifically address the duty of local authorities to assess whether young carers in its area have support needs.
- The Regulations set out what local authorities must determine when conducting a young carer's needs assessment. Among other things local authorities must determine:
 - The amount, nature, and type of care provided (or intended to be provided) by the young carer.
 - The extent to which this care is or will be relied upon by the family.
 - Whether the care which the young carer provides (or intends to provide) impacts on the young carer's well-being, education and development.
 - whether any of the tasks which the young carer is performing (or intends to perform) when providing care are excessive or inappropriate for the young carer to perform having regard to all the circumstances, and in particular the carer's age, sex, wishes and feelings.
 - These regulations ensure that young carers receive appropriate assessments and support.

7.4. The Care and Support (eligibility criteria) Regulations 2014:

- These Regulations set out when a carers' needs meet the eligibility criteria. The Regulations state that a carers' needs meet the eligibility criteria when:
 - the needs arises as a consequence of providing necessary care for an adult;

- the effect of the carer’s needs is that any of the circumstances specified in paragraph (2) of Regulation 3¹ apply to the carer; and
- as a consequence of that fact there is, or is likely to be, a significant impact on the carer’s well-being.

7.5. The Care and Support (assessment) Regulations 2014:

- Section 10 of the Care Act 2014 impose duties on a local authority to assess a carer's needs for support, by carrying out a needs assessment or a carer's assessment. These Regulations make further provision about such assessments.

7.6. Consultation

7.7. No consultation necessary at this time

7.8. There is no Legal statutory requirement for consultation, nor is there any Procedural or political requirement for a consultation to include this as a service.

7.9. Equality Impact Assessment

7.10. Equality impact assessment completed provided there was no groups who are negatively impacted by the addition of this service. Screening document has been attached as appendices 1.

8. Other Implications

8.1. No issues to consider.

9. Appendices

9.1. N/A

10. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	10/05/25
Monitoring Officer	Susan Zeiss	10/05/24
Executive Director(s)	Michael Marks	10/05/24
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Laurie Burton	4/6/24

¹ [The Care and Support \(Eligibility Criteria\) Regulations 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk), Regulation 3, Paragraph 2