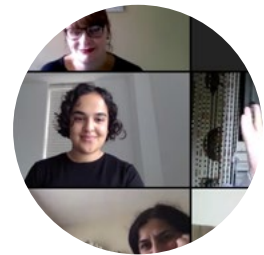


CARERS FEDERATION ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



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Due to the pandemic, and for environmental reasons, this year's annual report is available as an interactive PDF. Please click on the relevant sections below to jump to that page, use the 'prev' and 'next' buttons to scroll through the report and use the home button situated in the bottom right of each page to jump back to this contents page.

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INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Carers Federation, we would like to welcome you to our Annual Report. The report covers April 2020 to March 2021 and what a year that was!

It started in lockdown and ended in lockdown.

People say that you learn more in periods of adversity than in the good times. Covid 19 meant that we learned lots about the ingenuity and creativity of the wonderful staff who work for the charity. This report tells how they adapted to the circumstances of the pandemic and continued to bring support to people in the communities we serve. An organisation depends upon its staff and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their continuing hard work, dedication and commitment in delivering our services.

We would also like to thank our Board of Trustees for their commitment and support in guiding the organisation through troubled waters and doing this using zoom.

Achievements and performance

The following pages will tell you the story of the year in some detail and gives you a flavour of the passion and enthusiasm of the organisation by highlighting achievements we are particularly proud of:

AYC – The young carers service getting meals to families at the start of lockdown

Driving change – supporting Colleges to get accreditation for their support of carers within their student populations

Training – transferring teaching, learning and assessments to a virtual platform so that trainees could continue their courses and gain their qualifications.

Advocacy – accredited with the Quality Performance Mark recognising the quality of the service

Counselling – moving quickly to all counselling sessions being by telephone or online

The future

Carers Federation has demonstrated robust governance and service strategies. We have been quick to adapt to change and have wonderful staff we can rely on. As we move into the government's 'build back better' phase these things should hold us in good stead to meet future challenges. There are huge changes in progress in respect of Health and Social Care and as an organisation we are shaping to be able to take advantage of the opportunities this offers.

We hope you enjoy reading about what we have been up to and feel as enthusiastic as we do about how we have impacted positively in people's lives.

Trish Cargil
Chair

Rob Gardiner
CEO



As for everyone, 2021 proved to be a challenging year for the Training department in Carers Federation. At the end of 2020/21 we were as busy as we'd ever been. We had run several sold-out face-to-face training courses in January, February and early March before lockdown happened.

Almost overnight we had to go from being a face-to-face training model to complete online delivery. All our training courses planned for the first quarter of 2020/21 had to be postponed. One of the benefits was that investment had already been made in setting up a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). This meant that we had the platform on which we could deliver online learning and had been doing so for the Level 2 advocacy qualification.

To go online with our delivery, it meant re-designing, recording, and editing every training course associated with the Level 3 advocacy qualification in the space of two to three months. This equated to over fifty separate videos of course material and accompanying tasks and assignments.

We contacted stakeholders and candidates to mitigate the initial impact by making agreement with services (i.e. customers) to start remote assessment of candidates' work from April. All services agreed to this proposed way of working. All assessment went virtual and we quickly adopted new methods to continue candidate support, including use of Teams, Zoom and Webex.

The Training Team met in July to discuss and finalise a new business plan to understand and anticipate the continuing effects of COVID. We had demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in the first phase of the pandemic and now we had to have the foresight to see how things might continue to work in the future.

From September, we worked with City & Guilds to redesign the existing Level 3 qualification in independent advocacy. The new version of the qualification became a Level 4, with standards being raised across the sector. The focus switched to advocates being able to work across statutory disciplines as universal advocates, whilst allowing complaints advocates, community advocates and children advocates to become qualified. The new version was launched in January 2021.

As a result of the new qualification, the course had to once more be re-designed and redeveloped to meet the new criteria, again equating to another 50 videos of course material that had to be edited, re-recorded, and modified. All this was achieved whilst supporting over 400 candidates during 2020/21 with their independent advocacy qualifications.



COUNSELLING

Carers Federation counselling adapted quickly to the first lockdown in 2020. All our volunteers are in training and their training agencies provided specific courses to allow them to counsel remotely. They were soon talking to carers by phone, zoom or Microsoft teams.

Last summer the service recruited a new group of very able counselling volunteers for the year. We welcomed Maxine, Paul, Laura, Lydia, Hayley, Opal and Jenny to our now exclusively remote counselling service. It was heartening that Nichola, Julie and Jeanette also stayed with us having been recruited in previous years.

These volunteers allowed us to maintain and increase our level of provision, working with up to 4 clients at any one time. Demand for the service remained high with many carers telling us that they were seeking longer term support than that provided by other talking therapies.

The new counsellors successfully completed the Carers Federation Adult Safeguarding course online and all now have their certificates.

Lockdown and the pandemic definitely had an impact on carers and we saw an increase in carers talking about bereavement issues and the potential loss of loved ones. A surge in referrals in the autumn brought many conversations about the pressures of isolation and lack of contact with their usual support mechanisms. Carers felt alone and detached – even from the care and medical professionals they are usually in contact with.

With all this stress around it has been great to see all the all the positive feedback from carers. They have seen the service as a lifeline when in very troubled times.

"Thank you for being there for me, I don't know how I would have coped if I had not been speaking with you each week"

We have also had positive feedback from training providers about the support we have provided to the counsellors throughout the year and this mirrors what the counsellors themselves were saying. Queries did however start coming in as early as March about when we might return to face to face counselling.



This year has been extremely challenging for Action for Young Carers. We've adapted to home working and ensured Young Carers and their families still received the same support regardless of where and how it was delivered.

Staff have risen to the challenge and proved themselves to be incredibly flexible and dedicated in ensuring families' needs are met and services continue to work together. Action for Young Carers has been the main contact for many families, especially those in crisis. In adapting to the pandemic and subsequent lockdown procedures, we have provided food, hygiene and activity packages to support the families and young carers that rely on us.

Like many Carers Federation services, Action For Young Carers has adapted much of its work to an online setting, including cooking classes, arts & crafts sessions, mental health workshops and even Zoom boxing + mindfulness sessions.

One of the biggest responses to the pandemic has been the delivery of hot meals, thanks to the Local Giving coronavirus grant and Nottingham city council grant. We've been able to deliver 400 hot meals to over 150 families during lockdown which were lovingly prepared by Greyfriars Social Club and Hetvis

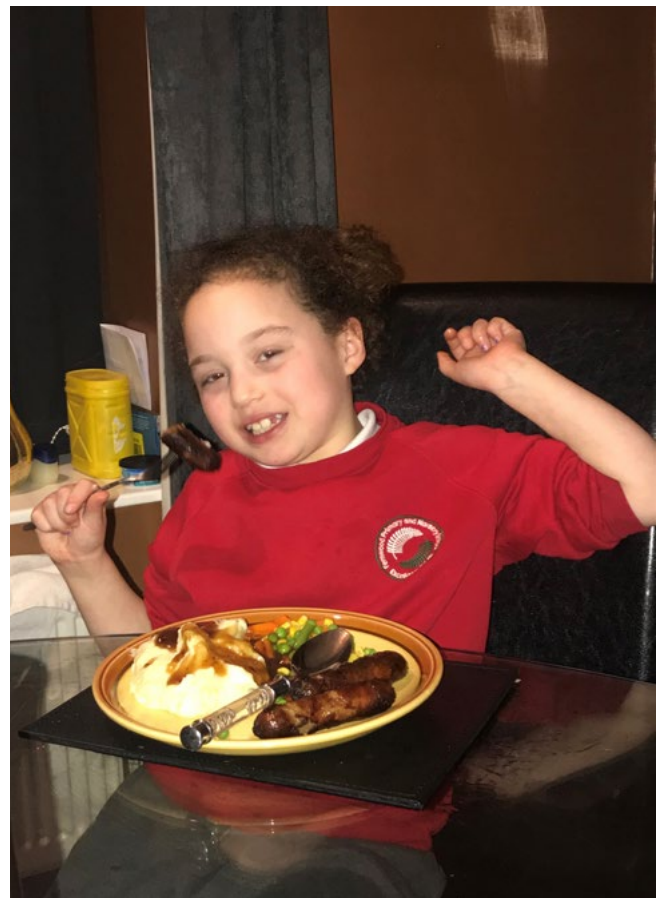


AYC

Action for Young Carers - AYC Flourish

Building on the success of our online cooking and nourishment sessions, lead by professional cooking tutor and nutritionist Rupert Aikman, Carers Federation was the grateful recipient of funding from The Masonic Charitable Foundation. This allowed us to expand the sessions into a series of online and in-person workshops (COVID permitting) which centred on the subjects of wellbeing. The project is titled AYC: Flourish.

Flourish includes more cooking workshops, encouraging healthy eating habits and teaching young carers and their families how to cook a nutritious meal from scratch, while also expounding the benefits to both physical and mental wellbeing by doing so. Additionally, Flourish has included arts & crafts sessions and non-contact boxing via Zoom.

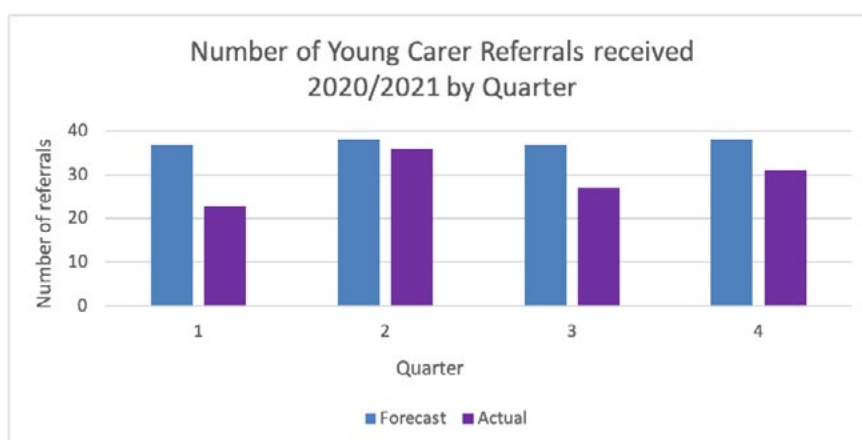
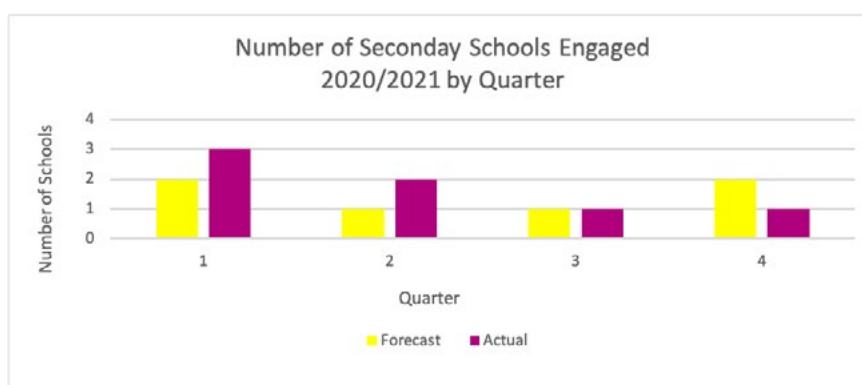
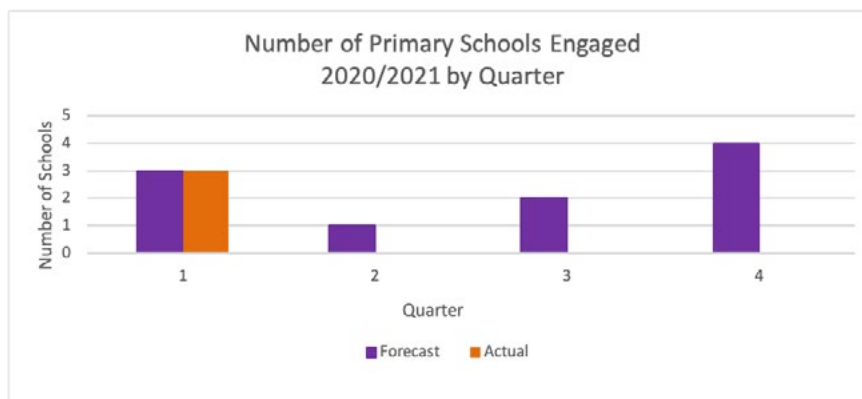


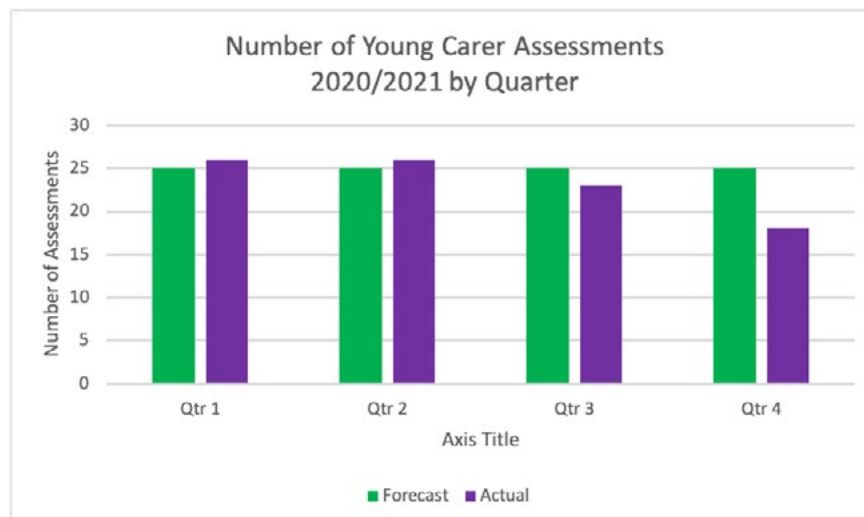
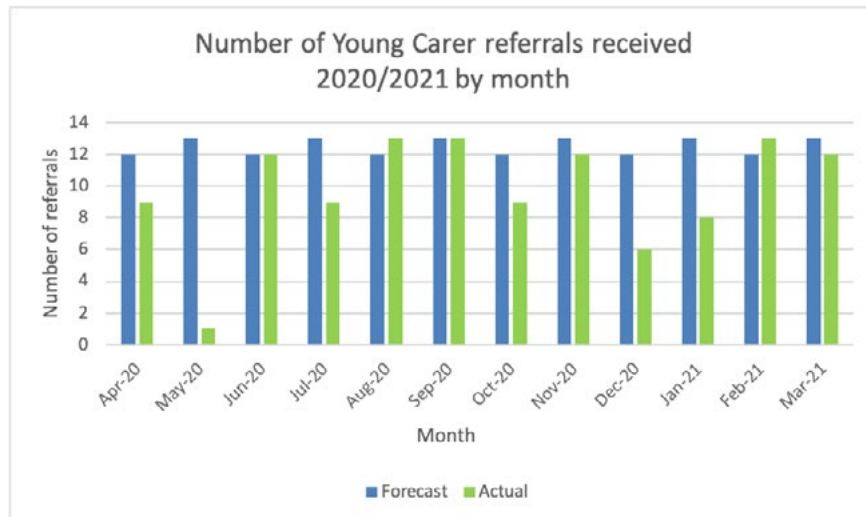
"Thank you, thank you for running the cooking course. My young person has struggled terribly with anxiety over the past year, which accumulated in a long period out of school. She used to come to all your sessions pre Covid but she hadn't accessed anything in over a year. Until now," a parent told us.

I signed her up for the cooking course under her strict instructions that she wasn't going to be on video and the mic was stayed off! The first session, she really struggled to even stay in the kitchen, never let alone engage in cutting or chopping. In fact she was so overwhelmed, she couldn't be part of the second session! However over the coming weeks, she has got involved slowly which has accumulated in a fab last session this afternoon!

I wish I could have shown you the smile on her face when she took a bite of her burger that SHE made with very little help from me!! It put such a spring in her step! Thank you so much for all the wonderful work that you do with our young carers who often get overlooked due to the caring of others!"







This year saw AYC collaborate with Mind of My own to create an app that both encourages and helps young carers to be in control of their own personal goals. This is an innovative and new way of working with Young Carers to allow them fully control their own action plans and to share stories via the app.



What does it do??

Sometimes it's hard for Young Carers to communicate with us directly, using the app makes this very easy

Can be used on phones, pcs, tablets and even xbox

Only the Young Carers name, YCs e-mail address and YCs date of birth is needed

It's confidential

YCs can tell us about what's good or bad

We will be using the app to carry out assessments with our Young Carers (no more boring paperwork!)

Mind of my own ONE – for YCs to use by themselves
Mind of my own EXPRESS – for YCs who need a little more help
eg. very young and cannot use device by themselves

A free and confidential service supporting Young Carers



step 1

Go to one.mindofmyown.org.uk and either sign up to a new account or log in to your existing account.

You can download the app from either the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store



step 2

Choose a scenario to complete – you can:-

'prepare for meeting'
'share Good news' or you might want to 'sort a problem'

step 3

Answer as many of the questions as you like and add more information where you want to.

Once you have finish, click on 'preview you statement'

step 4

Now that you have created a statement, you will get a dropdown menu with options to send it to a professional that you trust. Select your support worker from AYC. If the person you want to send it to is not on the list, you can type in their e-mail address yourself and send it to them

step 5

After selecting who you want to send the statement to, click on send. Your support worker will receive and email to read the statement and will get back to you phone, text or e-mail

step 6

If you sent a statement about a meeting, a few days later you can also choose the scenario 'How did the meeting go?' to say what has happened and how satisfied you were with the meeting. You can then send this feedback to your support worker

<https://mindofmyown.org.uk/>



YEI

(YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE)

Carers Federation continued to support unpaid carers back into Employment/Education or training during this year.

The aim for Carers Federation has been to focus on identifying and supporting unpaid carers aged between 16-29 who are currently within the NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) bracket. However, it has been extremely challenging due to the Coronavirus pandemic. As with all services we have had limited or no face to face support with carers. All support provided has been remotely via Microsoft Teams, Zoom or telephone contact. Regardless of this we have continued to support carers back into education, employment or training. Most Carers supported have chosen online training to prepare and up-skill ready to go into employment after the pandemic and lockdowns have eased.

To do this successfully we have invested time in to wider partnership working and awareness-raising both in educational and health settings.

During 2020/2021 we have identified over 20 carers within this age range who are NEET. All carers identified have received support from a designated support worker. The following number of carers has successfully secured a place in University, college, or Employment

Three secured places at university

Five secured places at college

Two carers secured an apprenticeship in pharmaceuticals and childcare

This year has been exceptionally challenging for carers having to support vulnerable family members during the pandemic. The majority of carers we support have struggled even more due to having to self-isolate. For this reason Carers Federation staff ensured those unable to do shopping or go out are priority for a statutory carers assessment, ensuring they are signposted to food banks. We also delivered hot meals weekly in partnership with Greyfriars social club.

Due to financial deprivation of some carers accessing the service, Carers Federation were able to apply for financial support to purchase laptops, stationary and financial support towards transport.



“My name is Marriam and I am a young carer for two family members. I joined Carers Federation as a young carer around September/ October of 2019 and I was assigned to the angels: Teresa initially then Rebecca.

In my first visit we talked about my situation as a young carer, my fears of and plans for the future and how Carers Federation would support me through the lovely Teresa and Rebecca. We also came up with a rough meeting plan (I was given the choice of when to hold the meetings and where which I found to be incredibly nice and convenient). The atmosphere at the Carers Federation office was very comfortable and welcoming and the fact that Teresa and Rebecca would always offer me a warm drink before the start of our meeting made the place feel even more welcoming!

I received a lot of practical, personalised support during and after the meetings, a few example include: extensive CV support, help with the submission of an extenuating circumstances form for the universities I was applying to at that time, support with buying my university essential electronic devices (a laptop and a printer) which I am sure are going to be a great aid for me when I start my first year of university.

One of the many great things about the support I received from Carers Federation is the that the support workers (especially Teresa and Rebecca) always go out of their own way to offer help in a very timely manner and I always feel that I can contact them and ask them for help whenever I need it.

Another very important factor is the fact that the support workers are very emotionally aware, very supportive and very kind. It is something that I personally (and I am certain all other young carers) appreciate a lot, especially considering the fact that the majority of young carers live under a lot of stress. Small gestures like sending an email to check on how my family and I are doing in these difficult times, wishing me luck for my university interviews and offering to listen to my worries and fears. all of these things do not require a lot of practical effort, they only require the person to have a genuine heart and Carers Federation is in my opinion very lucky to have such individuals work for them.



Case Study

I am incredibly lucky to have been accepted into King's College London, one of the best universities in the world to do an amazing course – Medicine – and I owe this success to the people I love and the people who supported me when I myself had doubts. These people include the people of Carers Federation, especially Teresa and Rebecca who I cannot thank enough for all the support they have given me.

The support I received and from Carers Federation has been fantastic. Carers Federation is a charity that deserves all the funding it gets and much much more. Investing in young people, especially those of them who are in need of extra support but get neither enough support nor enough recognition (which is sadly the case with young carers) is the right choice.

Young people have a lot of potential – they will grow up to lead the world and create the future and by supporting them you are investing in the future – a better future not only for them but for all of us."

Marriam.



YOUNG CARERS

A special thank you

Carers Federation would like to also say a special thank you to New Appeals and remember Philip Everett B.M.E after the sad news of his passing. Phil, the co-founder of The New Appeals 52 years ago, gave so much of his time to helping the less fortunate people in Nottingham. Phil was always keen for The New Appeals to help young carers. Many of us at the Carers Federation, and the families he so keenly advocated for, will miss him dearly.

We would also like to extend a massive thank you to all the following who have supported us in supporting Young Carers over the last year:

Hetvi's
Hearts church
Greyfriars social club
Vine community centre
Nottingham City Care
Nottingham City Council
Healthy Eating solutions Ltd

All those organisations in which have donated to the service or we have been successful in securing additional funding.

Members of the public who supported us in match funding with local giving coronavirus grant



ADVOCACY

What a year we have experienced with NHS Complaints Advocacy!

It started off on a high with Carers Federation being externally assessed and successfully re-accredited with the Quality Performance Mark (QPM) for its Advocacy services for another 3 years. The QPM being the recognised industry standard for quality in the delivery of Advocacy services.

Against this process the pandemic loomed requiring part of the assessment to be undertaken “virtually”. Little did we realise ‘virtual’ was to become the new way of doing things!

So, what was it really like to deliver NHS complaints advocacy in a pandemic – something there was no manual or instruction for?

During the first lockdown we had little alternative than to operate a slimmed down service due to the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman along with NHS England invoking legislative powers to pause any NHS complaints until June 2020 to allow NHS staff resources to be diverted to the front line to deal with Covid 19 patients. On this basis we took the decision to Furlough all our Team so we could retain their long years of experience for when the pause in complaints advocacy was lifted.

Once back in operation we were able to adapt our working methods very quickly to enable all our advocates to work from home using virtual tools. Teams and Zoom became the new standard with a surprising number of service users indicating they were able to participate, this will now remain an option in the future.

We were able to support all our service users through all the lockdowns and various easing's and are proud of our positive service user feedback which remained significantly above 95% throughout.



ADVOCACY

Whilst the pandemic has been a very challenging period for everyone, the advocacy service has come out of this even more resilient and in a position to build on the new opportunities it has presented, particularly in our ability to communicate with wider audiences and client groups.

The mental health and wellbeing of our Advocates is of paramount importance and one of the advantages of using new technology has been the ability to speak face to face with peers.

We provided bespoke support to all our advocates and were committed to ensuring that we have a strong network of support to help everyone give their best in what can be some extremely challenging circumstances.

We have maintained strong relationships with all the NHS Organisations with which we work and have helped to highlight where things may have gone wrong by using our core strengths around independence, impartiality and being non adversarial.

We are also proud to be closely involved with a number of National networks. In particular being a member of the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman working group which was established to develop the new NHS Complaints standards which will be piloted from late 2021 through to 2023 when it will be rolled out across the NHS.



SOCIAL CARE ADVOCACY

HMP Whatton

Carers Federation deliver the Social Care Advocacy service in HMP Whatton. The service recruits, trains and supervises prisoners to assist other prisoners with their everyday needs. This could be due to their age, disabilities, health needs, mental health or learning difficulties. The Social Care Advocates (SCA's) help to clean cells, change bed linen, collect meals, remind those they assist to attend appointments and take medication. We work in partnership with Local Authority Social Care, the Prison Health Service and Occupational Therapist. Our approach is modelled on reablement and empowerment, encouraging individuals to do for themselves and remain as independent as possible for the future and their release back into the community.

In late 2020 we went through a tendering process and were awarded a further two-year contract from March 2021-2023, our Project Co-ordinator hours increased to full time allowing us to develop and grow the programme. Gaining this new contract means that we have provided continuous delivery for the last eight years.

With the COVID pandemic and prison shutdowns staff and SCA's have been classed as keyworkers and been fortunate in being able to continue deliver the service, although be it with agreed restrictions in place. Regular testing, wearing of face masks and hand sanitising have become the new working practice with the priority of keeping those we assist, SCA's and staff safe.

SCA's have risen to the challenges that we have faced and adjusted to new ways of working, wearing extra PPE, carrying out bio cleaning and taking extra precautions when there have been possible or positive COVID cases. Group supervision sessions have to be suspended, but one to one supervision has continued, working in line with the changing of regimes. Recruitment has been difficult and slow but has highlighted the need to have SCAs on all wings to cover for future outbreaks.

Although it has been a challenging year for all we have continued to receive positive feedback on the service provided.



DRIVING CHANGE



Driving Change is a three-year project funded by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF). Carers Federation is working in partnership with the Learning and Work Institute to improve support for young adult carers in further education through working toward the Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS) accreditation and providing research-based evidence on the effectiveness of the QSCS framework on student achievement, retention, and outcomes. Colleges are supported to improve their provision for young adult carers ensuring that they have effective systems in place and a culture of understanding that supports young adult carers to achieve their aspirations and goals.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES

2020-21 we have worked with 12 colleges across England, NI, and Scotland (2 colleges) of which 11 have been able to complete and achieve the QSCS accreditation.

The twelfth college is due to complete the accreditation in September, and a further six colleges started the accreditation process in May/June and are due to complete in January/February 2022

Within NI we have worked with 5 out of the six regional colleges – we are hoping to re-engage Belfast Met in the coming year.

This means that since the Driving Change project started in 2019 a total of 29 colleges across all regions of the UK have achieved QSCS accreditation.

Additionally, 4 of the 6 colleges who achieved accreditation from the first pilot of the QSCS with L&W in 2017/18 are working toward reaccreditation this year (not part of Driving Change)

We have developed training packages for colleges which have gone live on the CF VLE – YAC Awareness and Carers Lead Training. This is available to all colleges participating on the Driving Change Project and will be offered to any other colleges who undertake the accreditation outside of the project without cost. However it allows colleges to see other training packages and at least one college has signed up for an additional training (Advocacy)



DRIVING CHANGE



CHALLENGES AND LEARNING

In previous years we have completed Initial and Final Assessments face to face at each college. However due to COVID restrictions, we have since March 2020 had to deliver support to colleges virtually. This has created some challenges in learning to use platforms such as Teams, deal with IT glitches, and work out how colleges can best share paperwork evidence, etc, as well as adjust to the inability to experience the college environment directly. However it has also enabled us to review our processes, and identify the positive benefits of virtual delivery, such as reducing travel time and costs and allowing more flexibility in arranging and planning meetings (ie. being able to have a meeting with a college in Scotland one day and a college in NI the next).

NETWORKS AND PROMOTION

The Driving Change Project is allowing us to work with a wider reach of colleges across the whole of the UK through partnership with L&W - We are able to utilise the direct networks the L&W Institute has with colleges including the Association of Colleges which has provided wider engagement.

As we progress, colleges who have participated in the project are promoting the QSCS accreditation to their education networks and can provide direct testimony to the process and outcomes of achieving accreditation.



DRIVING CHANGE



"As a College we already had a great deal of support in place for young carers, however, going through the accreditation has really helped us to develop and enhance the support we offered.

The project enabled us to drive the agenda forward, and offer additional support, and really hear the young carers lived experience.

This has helped us review our support offer, both inside and outside of the classroom and ensure we are holistically supporting these young carers through their educational journey.

The whole process was very clear and supportive. We're very proud to have achieved the accreditation and the lessons we've learnt going through it will enhance our support for other cohorts too."

-Heart of Worcestershire College

"Whilst working through completing the QSCS we built up strong relationships with the Young Adult Carers we were working with and became much more aware of the barriers which these young people face in recognising their role and responsibilities.

The best thing about the process has been raising the profile of young adult carers and allowing them to feel as though they are supported and their voices are heard within the college. Also our young adult carers have been able to develop friendships with a peer group of students in similar circumstances.

We look forward to continuing to support young adult carers in the next academic year."

North West Regional College

