

# Programme Evaluation

## Invitation to Tender

### Introduction

Carers Trust and The Children's Society are inviting suitable applicants to tender to complete an evaluation of the Young Carers in Schools (YCiS) programme. Carers Trust is leading the tender process. The evaluation will inform the delivery and structure of support available for young carers through the Young Carers in Schools programme.

The [Young Carers in Schools programme](#) is a free initiative delivered jointly by Carers Trust and The Children's Society. The programme works with schools and carer services across England to increase awareness and knowledge of young carers amongst education professionals, increase identification of young carers and ultimately help young carers achieve their full potential in education.

The programme was established in 2014 and [previously evaluated by Coram in 2018](#). Since January 2023, young carers have been included in the school census return. We are now seeing increased demand for the programme and with this evaluation intend to understand if YCiS is effective in improving young carers' experience in education.

### About Carers Trust

[Carers Trust](#) works to transform the lives of unpaid carers. It partners with its network of local carer organisations to provide funding and support, deliver innovative and evidence-based programmes and raise awareness and influence policy. Carers Trust's vision is that unpaid carers are heard and valued, with access to support, advice and resources to enable them to live fulfilled lives.

In 2022/23 we directly supported 378,617 carers across the UK Network, with a wider reach of 1,047,823 carers registered across our Network. Our 2023 Impact Report is available [here](#).

### About The Children's Society

The Children's Society are there for children and young people when they most need help. We support them when they're facing huge life challenges like abuse, exploitation, or neglect, and campaign tirelessly for the big social changes needed to change the lives of the next generation for the better. We've been doing this work for 140 years and we won't rest until every child is safe, happy, and hopeful.

Further information about The Children's Society can be found [here](#).

### Background on young carers

The Children and Families Act 2014 definition says a young carer is 'A person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person'. This can include caring for

parents, grandparents and/or siblings. The person they care for may live with a physical condition or something more hidden, such as a mental health problem, an addiction, or neurodiversity.

For many young carers, school offers respite, providing a dedicated space away from their caring role. However, young carers face challenges balancing their education with their caring responsibilities. At present school support provision for young carers is inconsistent across the country. Evidence shows young carers are at risk of poorer attendance and attainment and more challenging experiences within education settings. The [All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry](#) looking into the impact on life opportunities of young carers and young adult carers provides further information on the challenges young carers face in education, access to further/higher education and employment, as well as participating in social activities and their own health and wellbeing.

The [attendance/absence data for 2022/23](#) published by the Department for Education showed that young carers had lower attendance than their peers (5 percentage points lower at 87.7% compared to 92.7%). In addition, 39% of young carers were persistently absent (missed 10% or more of school) compared with 21.1% of other pupils - nearly twice as high. Carers Trust produced a [briefing](#) on this.

## Background on the Young Carers in Schools programme

Run jointly by Carers Trust and The Children's Society, Young Carers in Schools is a free initiative that supports schools to improve their provision for young carers. The programme provides an Award for schools to apply to for good practice; resources schools can access; and webinars and other learning events. The Theory of Change (appendix 1) shows the short, medium and long term outcomes – as well as the impact.

Further information about the programme is available on the [Young Carers in Schools website](#).

### Programme delivery

The primary deliverable is the Young Carers in Schools Award. To date, 549 schools have achieved the Award. This was relaunched in January 2024 following a consultation in 2023. The Children's Society led the consultation, speaking to 42 professionals and 40 young carers. The outcome of this consultation shaped the new Award:

- To streamline the process – submission is now through an online form rather than emails; the information is clearer and on one webpage.
- To have one Award rather than 3; a limited number of schools achieved Silver or Gold in the previous Award scheme. We will have an 'Award Plus' for schools that want to go further.
- To specifically include criteria in the new Award which was deemed essential but was only in the Silver or Gold awards previously.
- To have a 3 year expiry date for – previously no expiry.

The Award launch was attended by 300+ delegates, with the evaluation data showing up to 200 schools that attended intend to apply within the next 18 months. In 2023, 98 schools applied – which was the highest year to date. The first submission round is March 2024, with subsequent submission rounds at the end of each financial quarter.

The programme also provides resources and webinars to support schools in improving their provision for young carers. The [YCiS Schools Guide](#) was updated in 2022 and

provides a step-by-step guide for schools to introduce and improve young carer provision – as well as 40+ individual tools. We hold webinars and other learning events which either focus on specific areas or are high level awareness raising sessions. Over the evaluation period (i.e. since Jan 2021), there has not been a consistent offer of these additional activities.

In September 2023 we launched the [Young Carers Challenge](#), which is a commitment schools make to putting in place 5 steps in the next academic year, if they aren't already in place. To date 315 schools have committed to this. The 5 steps are:

- Having a Young Carers Champion in school
- Raising awareness of young carers with staff and pupils
- Having a Young Carers Agreement/Policy
- Ensuring young carers are identified and recorded correctly
- Linking in with their local young carers service

We do not work directly with schools, though we do respond to a number of queries. We find many schools that apply to the Award have a strong relationship with their local carer service or local authority, who has supported with their application.

## Evaluation scope and requirements

We are inviting suitable applicants to tender to complete an independent evaluation of the Young Carers in Schools programme. The main objective of the evaluation is to assess the intended and unintended results/ outcomes (positive and negative) of the Young Carers in Schools programme (as set out in the Theory of Change), specifically:

1. Whether achieving the Award has an impact on:
  - School staff knowledge of young carers and confidence in identifying young carers
  - The number of identified young carers in schools
  - Young carers' wellbeing, attendance and attainment
2. Whether additional activity, such as toolkits and webinars, are helpful for schools and if any additional activity is required to support schools improve their young carer provision.
3. To evaluate the process around what's working well (for whom and in what context), what is not working well and any recommendations for change.
4. The role of partnership working in delivering the Young Carers in Schools programme, specifically young carer services and local authorities.

We would expect four outputs from the evaluation:

1. To deliver an interim report that presents a clear and targeted set of recommendations. This report would focus on the impact of the previous Award (January 2021 to December 2023) in order to inform current programme delivery. Interim report target date December 2024.
2. To deliver the final report to in September 2025 that includes programme activity from January 2024.
3. To identify a clear set of guidelines for continuous monitoring, evaluation and learning. This will include a review of the Theory of Change. To be provided alongside the interim report in December 2024.
4. To identify any policy messages that emerge from the findings in both the interim and final report.

## How it will be used

This evaluation will provide an independent assessment of the programme against its intended outcomes. In identifying and synthesising key learning points, recommendations and principles as per the evaluation scope, the Young Carers in Schools programme will also be able to:

- Provide robust evidence and good practice examples to promote to schools to show the positive impacts of engaging in the programme on this vulnerable pupil group.
- Report back to the funders, including prospective funders, on the impact and effectiveness of the Young Carers in Schools programme.
- Provide recommendations for decision-makers on the provision of support for young carers in schools.

## Budget and oversight

The maximum budget for this work is **£30,000-£40,000 inclusive** of all expenses and VAT. The payment schedule will be agreed with the selected consultancy partner.

The **Carers Trust Project Manager** is Adem Ruggiero-Cakir, Programme Manager (Education) who will act as the main point of contact for this evaluation. The Project Manager will facilitate engagement and feedback from wider stakeholders as required.

The Project Manager will be supported by an **evaluation steering group** which will include:

- Head of Young & Young Adult Carers, Carers Trust
- Head of UK Social Impact, Carers Trust
- A member of The Children's Society's Research, Evaluation and Impact Team

The Executive Director of Programmes, Policy and Impact at Carers Trust will act as Executive Sponsor and provide oversight at key stages.

## Methodology, deliverables and schedule

We welcome bidders' proposals of suitable methodologies and approaches in conducting this evaluation. Please consider the below elements in drafting proposals, timelines and budgets:

- The programme was independently evaluated in 2017/2018. The time period for this evaluation is from January 2021.
- We have contact details for all schools that have achieved the Award.
- The evaluator is expected to include a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection with key programme staff, schools, carer services, local authorities, young carers and other relevant stakeholders.
- As of January 2023 schools have been asked to record young carers in their school census returns. 78% of schools recorded 0 young carers, which cannot be accurate. Where this data is available from schools, we would expect the evaluator to analyse this data to see if involvement in the programme correlates with an improved young

carer provision and outcomes e.g. against national prevalence/expectation, changes over time, comparison against other schools.

- Carers Trust will undertake final design and branding of all outputs to be published externally. These costs and time **should not** feature in proposals, budgets or time allocated.
- Stated dates for deliverables are when all content from the consultant/team will have been agreed with the evaluation steering group. Project plans should include **at least three weeks** for review and feedback, and allow for at least 2 rounds of review. Exact dates will be decided within the methodology plan and reviewed as needed throughout the contract.

Alongside the stated evaluation reports, the following deliverables will be required:

- The consultant/team will be required to present an interactive workshop based on learning and recommendations from the interim report to Carers Trust and The Children’s Society relevant staff.
- The consultant/team will be required to present on findings at Young Carers in Schools events and seminars (estimated to be no more than five throughout the evaluation period). It is anticipated that meetings, workshops and presentations will be delivered both face to face and online.

Key target dates are:

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>
Submission deadline	22 May 2024
Interviews with shortlisted consultants	12/13 June 2024
Notification of outcome	14 June 2022
Introduction meeting (1.5hrs)	w/c 24 June 2024
Inception meeting (2.5hrs)	w/c 8 July 2024
Final methodology plan agreed with evaluation steering group	w/c 15 July 2024
Interim report with findings (evaluating activity Jan 21 – Dec 23). Written for an external audience	6 December 2024
Interactive workshop based on learning and recommendations (with project staff)	31 January 2025
Final report (evaluating activity from Jan 24 – May 25). Written for an external audience	September 2025

The evaluation steering group anticipate working closely with the consultant/team to reflect on data analysis, emerging lessons and to make evidenced evaluation focus adjustments. Regular project check-in points will be confirmed once the project is underway.

## Consultancy partner selection criteria

We are seeking to work with a consultant/team who demonstrates **a mix of the following attributes, experience and knowledge:**

- Demonstrable experience of conducting programme evaluation, particularly those which have identified common themes and learning from a variety of documentation and partners.

- Demonstrable experience of using a range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to collect data and articulate evaluation findings in an engaging and accessible way.
- Excellent communication including comprehension, listening, verbal and written skills that will enable positive engagement with programme stakeholders, including carers.
- Knowledge and understanding of young carers, challenges they may face in education, and the carers support sector and challenges.
- Demonstrable experience of delivering evaluations/research which measure impact in schools.

## Submission

Submissions should be in Arial font size 11 and **must not exceed 8 pages of A4**. Please cover the following points in your submission:

- Summary of the experience and expertise of the consultant/team that will be leading the work.
- Your understanding of the requirements as outlined.
- Detailed outline of how you meet the required selection criteria.
- Outline of the approach and methodology. This should include a high-level delivery timeline.
- Details of how your approach will address issues of data protection and consent, diversity, safeguarding, equity and inclusion and any other ethical considerations.
- Highlight any potential challenges, risks and limitations of the evaluation process that should be considered and how these will be addressed.
- Full budget breakdown, with clear costings including day rates, VAT, expenses and any other costs. Explanation of how the proposal offers Value for money.
- Brief outline and hyperlinks to **two** relevant pieces of work you have delivered. **We will not review more than two.**
- Details of two individual referees, outlining the relationship and work carried out, full contact details and confirmation that you have permission to share their details with those involved in the review of the submission. Carers Trust will contact you ahead of contacting any named referee.

**In addition to the 8 sides**, please also submit an annex of CV's for each individual (no more than one page per individual), involved in the delivery of the work, stating the role they would play. Their stated experience should relate to the role they are to play in your proposed approach. Please note that all team members are required to have an up to date (i.e. within the last 3 years) Enhanced DBS check.

Submissions should be sent to [youngcarers@carers.org](mailto:youngcarers@carers.org) by end of day, 22 May 2024. The subject line should be "**Young Carers in Schools Evaluation - [name of consultancy partner]**"

Carers Trust will process your data according to UK data protection law (the General Data Protection Regulations). Please see our [Privacy Notice](#) for further information on how we will use and store it.



## Scoring criteria

All proposals received will be assessed according to the following weighted scoring criteria:

- Understanding and Requirements (10%)
- Capacity (10%)
- Experience and Expertise (25%)
- Budget and Value for Money (15%)
- Approach and Methodology (25%)
- Research Ethics, Safeguarding and Governance (15%)

The successful project will go through an ethics review process.

## Queries

Carers Trust is leading the tender process. Any queries and/or requests for an informal conversation about any aspect of this ITT should be sent to [youngcarers@carers.org](mailto:youngcarers@carers.org). A response will be provided within 48 working hours of receipt.

**Appendix 1: Theory of Change**

