



2021/22 Report to Didcot Town Council

7th April 2022

Funding to support the mental health of young carers.

Our work with Young Carers in Didcot and Across Southern Oxfordshire

We are seeing the world open up again and people are able to do the things they were able to before the pandemic, see family & Friends, go to school or work, go on holidays and generally have fun, this is not so for our young carers.

Feedback from our families and young carers including those in Didcot continues to highlight the mental impact of the pandemic. The additional stress and anxiety young carers were, and are experiencing, focused on worrying about the health of the person they care for, worrying about bringing the virus into their homes and worrying about their futures. We have seen real hardship and have been working effectively with other agencies, including foodbanks to improve these situations. The mental health of young carers is a real concern and will clearly impact for some time beyond the pandemic.

This funding has come at a crucial time, young carers mental health is declining and waiting lists for CAHMs is years rather than months, 33.3% of our young carers live within the Didcot area and the funding has allowed us to provide young carers with the mental health support they need.

Our support workers have been working actively to engage in local communities and schools to help educate them in identifying young carers and promoting the support we can offer. Our counsellor has been able to provide mental health support sessions in schools for young carers giving them a trusted person to talk about their emotions, develop coping skills and build emotional resilience. Our counsellor has also been able to provide support to our support workers ensuring their good mental health and providing them an opportunity to offload with any feelings they have regarding some of the more vulnerable cases they have dealt with. We have been able to build mental health kits which are full of resources such as books, worry monsters, emotions cards etc.. that young carers are able use in 121 emotional support sessions. Our mindfulness movement program run by our yoga practitioner Emma has run sessions teaching young carers with breathing and relaxation techniques to help reduce stress and anxiety.

BE FREE YONG CARERS could not continue its work with young carers if it wasn't for the spectacular support of the communities across the Vale and South Oxfordshire areas. The support of parishes and Towns are vital contributions to help fund our work. We are therefore very grateful to the Town Council for its continuing support, which importantly reflects the value the Town Council places on our service.

We are very pleased to report that for the foreseeable future BE FREE YOUNG CARERS will continue to provide its vital support service to young carers in Didcot and surrounding areas.