

YOUNG CARERS AND SPORTS: AN EXPANDING AGENDA

In June 2022 the Young Carers Alliance published a paper "Football and Young Carers". This was a study based on information collected about initiatives in 24 football clubs and is referred to as "the initial report" elsewhere in this update paper.

<https://www.caringtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Football-and-Young-Carers-June-2022.pdf>

This note provides details of some subsequent developments, including encouraging signs of a similar approach beginning to be taken in other sports; and also of a developing partnership with "Carers Active". It does, from all this, appear that most of the approaches described in the initial report are entirely transferable to other sports, affording significant opportunities for future development. The Young Carers Alliance is holding an online Research, Policy and Practice Forum on Improving the health and wellbeing of young carers through sport. This will be on Thursday 1st December 2022 from 1.30 to 3.00pm Booking is open here.

The Alliance also has been given an opportunity to present details of this work at Carers UK's annual State of Caring conference on 10 November (also on line).

<https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/state-of-caring-conference>

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN FOOTBALL



There are several conversations going on with association football clubs following the publication of the initial report. This has included Watford FC's charitable foundation. Watford FC Community Sports and Education Trust had first engaged with young carers in 2016 when they hosted the annual Hertfordshire young carers conference. The Trust are currently working with the NHS in piloting social prescribing and this explicitly includes young carers. The Charity are now talking to Carers in Hertfordshire to discuss how potentially to build on this and enhance their offer to young carers.

Barrow AFC have met with Furness Carers to take the opportunity to refresh their partnership in supporting young carers.

Below is a photo of a young carer from Manchester who was sent a copy of Marcus Rashford's book "Breakfast Club Activities", together with a personal message from the United and England star. A small thing maybe; but reflective of growing awareness of young carers.



RUGBY UNION

In the initial report, it was noted that the Manchester Young Carers Partnership have formed good links with Sale Sharks Rugby Football Club. The Sharks Community Trust run "Advantage" which is an Employability Programme for 16-18 years old who may not have had the best school experience, are unsure what to do after their GCSE's and who may need a helping hand in finding their next step. Advantage is run as a young carer friendly training programme.

The Sharks Community Trust also run a mental well-being programme that includes young carers. This programme is known as "Find Your Brave".



The Rugby Football Union are commencing discussions involving NHS England about potentially developing an initiative around supporting young carers and have expressed themselves as keen to do so. More details of this will be shared as soon as possible about this exciting development.



NETBALL

An initiative with young carers is also now being developed by Hitchin Netball Club as a direct response to the initial report. The club are encouraging participation of young carers and have adapted their recruitment process accordingly. This has been modified to ask if players have caring responsibilities (as below). There is the opportunity to signpost to the local young carer organisation at the same time. Prior to this change, the club knew of only one member of the club who was a young carer, but with this process they have identified 14 young carers (10% of club membership) aged between 9 years and 16 years. (One of whom has asked for further information). This is a model that could potentially be replicated by many other sports clubs.

The club are also raising funds to help meet costs of registration, kit and help with travel. A page on the website promoting young carer awareness is to be added shortly. It is also planned to encourage other netball clubs to take similar initiatives.

Supporting Young Carers

A Young Carer is someone aged 18 and under who cares for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. This support can be emotional, physical or a combination of both.

HNC wants to ensure Young Carers in our club are not missing out on opportunities because of their caring responsibilities. We will also be linking in with [Young Carers in Herts](#) and [Young Carers in Beds](#) to offer netball opportunities to Young Carers these organisations support.

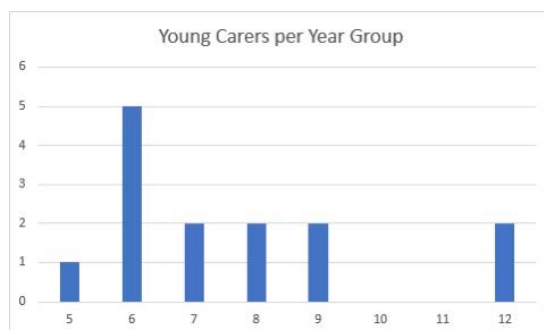
Is your child a Young Carer *

No

Yes

If you answered Yes, check here if you would like to discuss this with the Club Chair.

In the table below, is a breakdown by age of the young carers identified so far. It can be seen that the year 6 group of the club have 5 young carers (age 10) This also shows that nearly every age group has young carers.



PARTNERSHIP WITH CARERS ACTIVE

Some contact had already been established with Carers Active at the point in June when the initial report was published and a more comprehensive partnership approach is being developed. This will include in 2023 the Young Carers Alliance helping to jointly promote a Carers Active April campaign, so that we have a whole family, all age approach. By pooling resources, we should be able to achieve greater impact, benefiting carers of all ages.

ABOUT THE YOUNG CARERS ALLIANCE

The Young Carers Alliance is a rapidly growing network of organisations and individuals committed to improving recognition and support available for young carers, young adult carers and their families. The Alliance brings together representatives from research, policy and practice, all of whom are committed to bringing about improved outcomes for all young carers. The Young Carers Alliance provides opportunities for collaboration, sharing best practice and a strong, collective voice for young carers.

At the time of writing, the Alliance has 121 member organisations and over 300 individual supporters.



Improving Recognition and Support for Young Carers

This update was prepared by John Bangs OBE, Independent Carers Policy Adviser and Community Liaison Officer, Kingstonian FC. It is hoped to collect further information on other initiatives in sports. If you have details of other similar activities or would like to discuss initiating one, please do let John know and contact him at jbangsuk@icloud.com or [@JohnBangs15](https://twitter.com/JohnBangs15) (Twitter) For more information about the

Young Carers Alliance contact: youngcarersalliance@caringtogether.org www.youngcarersalliance.org