

Young Carer Early Intervention Payments delivered by trusted assessors



What is the initiative?

Young Carer Early
Intervention Payments

Who runs it?

Action for Carers (Surrey Young Carers) and Surrey Independent Living Council, who administer the payments. Partners are Adult Social Care, Surrey Independent Living Council, Action for Carers Surrey and Borough Based Carer Support Schemes

Who does it benefit?

Any young carer in Surrey whether they are accessing Surrey Young Carers or not, and who are not engaged with statutory services.

What does it do?

The Early Intervention Payment is one support mechanism to mitigate the impact of caring responsibilities on children and young people. It is a payment of up to £500 for individual young carers to pay for a range of personalised items to provide a life beyond caring.

The Carers Commissioning Group in Surrey saw benefit in allowing Surrey Young Carers and other partner agencies, as trusted assessors, to initiate simple, preventive style carer personal budgets of up to £500 through a straightforward, procedure.

When did it start?

2011.

Why was it started?

Direct Payments for carers and young carers can be made from adult social care and children's services (with young carers who are under 16 the payment is made to a responsible adult.) However, the multi-agency carers commissioning group

wished for payments to reach more young carers, that is those young carers who are not currently known to statutory services. This light touch approach was designed to enable more carers to access early stage support avoiding the need for more intrusive and costly interventions down the line.

What were the aims and objectives?

Aim:

- The initiative aimed to support the priorities in the refreshed Carers Strategy specifically by mitigating the impacts of caring responsibilities on young people, and ensuring that caring responsibilities for young people were kept in balance through the development of positive areas in their lives.

Objectives:

- To increase the number of young carers supported at an early stage without the need for a more formal assessment.
- To respond to the needs of young carers more quickly and directly.
- To deliver a simple personalised approach to supporting young carers financially.

How is it funded?

Ongoing funding has been allocated by the Carers Commissioning Group.

What has it achieved?

“The payment allowed me to continue to have my freedom and continue my education.”

Young carer

“Absolutely thrilled for my daughter receiving the payment, it’s made such a difference and is great for her to get the recognition.”

Parent

“Unlike other forms of funding for young carers this process is so quick and simple without lengthy form filling or lengthy criteria. It does what it says and gives some early intervention.”

Young Carers Worker

The intervention began as a pilot back in October 2011; however it has now become very much an embedded process. Since its establishment it has made over 250 successful applications for young carers in Surrey. In this period over £76,000 has been allocated through Early Intervention Direct Payments. This number is on course to increase.

There has been lots of positive verbal feedback. Families often say just how rapid the process is and how it has made a valuable change to their children who are young carers.

By working with other organisations such as local carers centres supporting adult carers to receive Early Intervention Payments, and pooling the payments, this has enabled families to have a break from caring together as a whole family which has been for some the first time in many years. Young carers will often not wish to be separated from their families.

Surrey County Council had previously recognised the need for preventative work of this kind for young carers. By implementing this process Surrey County Council has been able to improve outcomes for young carers in line with the priorities in the refreshed Carers Strategy.

The intervention has broken down barriers for young carers accessing support. The process is simple, it does 'what it says on the tin'. This is what makes the Early Intervention Payments so successful and not simply a paper exercise.

Early Intervention Payments are now an integral part of service delivery, enabling young carers to achieve positive outcomes.

How have young carers and their families been involved in planning and delivering this work?

There was no direct involvement by young carers and families in the design of process. However, the initiative has arisen as a direct response to ongoing feedback received from young carers as well as adult carers that they wanted a more immediate and proportional response to their needs.

How is the initiative run?

All staff from Surrey Young Carers are trained to be trusted assessors for the local authority. They are therefore in a position to make the application for a Young Carer Early Intervention Payment.

There are no specific criteria for receiving an Early Intervention Payment. Payments are available for young carers supported by Surrey Young Carers where a need has been identified and where a support payment would be beneficial.

Where young carers are in families who are currently receiving a service from adult social care, primary mental health services or children's services, direct payments would be initiated through their normal procedures.

A worker from Surrey Young Carers will meet with a young carer and using the assessment tool My Life Now, will complete a Carer Support Evaluation to identify areas of the young carer's life that would benefit from an Early Intervention Payment. Together a decision is made about the best way to spend the payment and a simple one-page Young Carers Direct Payment Request Form is completed with the young carer and their family.

The My Life Now or other recent evidence along with the request form is authorised by the Service Manager. The request form is then sent to Surrey Independent Living Council which carries out the administration of the payments; the receipt process and monitoring of the expenditure. Once the application has been completed, the process is very swift and can take less than 48 hours from the initial application to when families receive the money. It does not often take longer than two weeks.

Payments can be either in cheque form or paid directly to a bank account. If the carer's personal circumstances suggest that a cheque payment to them may not be appropriate, a direct purchase can be organised by Surrey Independent Living Council. Where a young carer is under 16, payments must be paid to a responsible adult or held by a third party such as Surrey Young Carers.

Payments can be up to £500 per person. Amounts vary however, for example payments of £180 have been made for gym membership and of £500 towards a new laptop.

Decisions as to how payments are used are carer led and are allocated for a wide range of different items and reasons. They have been used for example, for purchasing computers to reduce isolation, and funding for new hobbies to 'provide a life beyond caring'. One example of this was funding for a young carer and her mother to be able to spend quality time together learning to play the guitar. Another young carer, with a fear of water, requested swimming lessons and needed individual tuition. They are now a competent swimmer. Older young carers have requested driving lessons and payments have enabled them to be fast tracked through to passing their tests.

More than one young carer within a family may receive a payment and young carers are eligible to receive subsequent Young Carer Early Intervention Payments every 12 months.

Surrey Independent Living Council provides information and promotion about the service through leaflets that are distributed in the community, for example at GP services.

What methods have been particularly effective?

The fact the process is so simple makes it so effective and successful. Now that the voluntary sector can have this in its toolkit means that it is truly preventative and not reactive. The Young Carers Direct Payment Request form is only one page long.

Carers really value the quick response time for accessing payments.

Have there been any challenges along the way?

We have had consultation meetings along the way with other providers such as generic adult carers support services in Surrey, to smooth out any issues and help improve the delivery and promotion of the Early Intervention Payments. The main challenge however is the capacity to reach the high numbers of young carers who would benefit from this early intervention.

There are cases where the family and/or young person does not wish a referral to be made to the young carers service and in these cases the adult carers support schemes will record details of the young carers concerned. A protocol has been agreed between adult carers support schemes and Surrey Young Carers to enable better identification of young people who may be affected by their caring situation.

What hints and tips might help me get started?

- Keep any system simple for both professionals and young carers to understand.
- Keep young carers' needs as the primary focus.

Are there any useful documents that could assist me?

The website for **Action for Carers Surrey (Surrey Young Carers)**.

Surrey Independent Living Council Centre for Independent Living's website.

Where can I get further information?

Geoff Parks
Deputy Manager Surrey Young Carers
Astolat
Coniers Way
Burpham
Guildford GU4 7HL

Email: geoff.parks@actionforcarers.org.uk

Tel: 01483 568269

Funded by

