

CareFree Young Carers What Employers Want Project

Aim of the project

The aim of the project has been to enable 10 Young Adult Carers to increase their knowledge about employment, develop skills and confidence in preparing for and seeking employment. This included gathering interested YAC to take part in the project, arranging 2 training sessions which looked at developing confidence in interview skills, identifying potential employees in taking part in the interviews, supporting the Young Adult Carers in interviewing if needed and then evaluating and reflecting on the learning and experience the Young Adult Carers took from the project.

The Recruitment Process

Young Adult Carers were approached in the older Young Carers groups over a 4 week period to identify who might be interested. This had a mixed response, some did not feel they were confident enough to take part, some just had no interest at all, and some did not have the time due to college commitments.

We did however have more success when identifying Young Carers who already had a link with each other, so enabling friends to work together or those Young Carers who knew each other from their group to be involved together.

The group was a mixed group of both male and female, aged 16-19 years old, 4 BME young Carers, 6 White British young carers. The group are at different stages of education, both entering into college for the first time, attending college and one looking for employment alongside education.

To exploring where the group started before training a pre training questionnaire was completed:

Rating themselves between 1 -Strongly disagree and 6 -Strongly agree

Is it important for me to learn new skills?

60% scored 6, 40% scored 5

I know what I need to do to get a job...

70% scored 1, 30% scored 2

I feel ready for the work place.....

90% scored 1 10% scored 2

I have the skills I need to get a job...

80% scored 1, 20% scored 2, 10% scored 3

I am confident to speak to employers.....

70% scored 2, 30% scored 3

I have clear goals for the future.....

30% scored 1, 40% scored 2, 10% scored 3, and 20% scored 5.

It was helpful to have a starting point, there was a varied response in the discussion within the groups but the results indicated that a lack of confidence in planning for the future and also being able to communicate with employers...

Interview Training.....

The training has been delivered in 2 sessions in the evening. This enabled the young carers to travel to a centre which was familiar to them and was not taking them out of their normal routine of attending young carer's sessions in the evening. The group felt the question examples were ok but wanted to have the flexibility to ask in their own language as this would allow them to feel more confident in the discussion. We also looked at the possibility of asking a different question which may be important at the time but this was not something that the group felt they would feel confident in attempting!!

As part of the training we did an activity with the skills cards, this helped the group to get to know each other's thoughts, perceptions of themselves and to look at how the roles would be shared out who felt able to take on the interviewing and who would like to take notes and listen to what was said. The group also looked at what they had to offer as young carers, the skills and attributes they have already to take to a job and what they feel they would need to develop in the future.

During the training we talked about recruitment and applying for jobs... what information you share when completing an application form and what that might tell an employer before you arrive.

We spoke about interviewing and what this involves, the group felt that having the ability to ask what employers are looking for would help them to understand what they need to develop in the future. The young carers were interested to find out if their 'tool box' of skills (especially those that were transferable from their caring role) is important to share or will these stop employers hiring young carers.

Interviewing employers.....

In total 5 interviews were completed, one interview was supported by a member of staff supported by a young adult carer. The interviews took place in the city centre area; interviewees completed these in pairs and fed back following their experiences.

Interviews took place with 5 different organisations, 1 bank, 1 retail establishment and 3 food outlets (2 cafes and 1 restaurant).

The feedback from the interviews was very positive, the young carers felt that they had raised the understanding about Young Carers and what their roles are within the family. Employers were able to share a range of information about what they look for when employing young people which included:

Presentation, smart and clean, polite and interactive, good time keeping, willingness to learn but not always a need for previous experience. The group reported that they could see employers as individuals as well as 'The Boss' which made it less intimidating. During the training we talked about recruitment and applying for jobs... what information you share when completing an application form and what that might tell an employer before you arrive.

How has it helped me for the future?

Evaluation of the project following training and interviewing, the young carers were able to share a range of experiences which has supported them feeling more confident in looking for employment in the future such as:

'It was good being the person asking the questions- I don't feel as scared of the idea of interviews as much'

'When you go for an interview I am checking them out as much as they are looking at me and what I offer'

'Employers are not put off by my caring role and can see I do more than most adults'

'Caring doesn't feel such a problem and has made me more confident in looking for the job I want'

Post training questionnaires were completed following the training and interview sessions:

Rating themselves between 1 -Strongly disagree and 6 -Strongly agree

Is it important for me to learn new skills?

90% scored 6, 10% scored 5

I know what I need to do to get a job...

60% scored 4, 40% scored 3

I feel ready for the work place.....

70% scored 5 30% scored 4

I have the skills I need to get a job...

40% scored 4, 30% scored 3, 30% scored 4

I am confident to speak to employers.....

70% scored 6, 30% scored 5

I have clear goals for the future.....

50% scored 5, 30% scored 4, 20% scored 3.

The results indicated an increase in confidence, understanding of the job market and an awareness of their own skills and ability to progress in the future. One Young Adult Carer felt less confident in interviewing and was supported by a member of the team to take part in observing the interview and although was not directly interviewing was still able to gain positive changes to her own progress and view of her future.

How did it benefit employers?

Follow up discussion with employers provided an insight into how employers benefited from the experience. They felt it helped to increase their understanding in various different ways:

'Better understanding of what a Young Adult Carer is' 4 of the participants had not appreciated previously the level of responsibility undertaken.

'Greater awareness of the skills that Young Carers have to offer in a work place setting'

'Inspired by the confidence and skills demonstrated by the Young Adult Carer'

'Understanding of how fixed hours can stop YAC from applying for a role in the business that they are in'

'Felt that retail, and food industry could provide more flexibility if they looked at it properly'

'Valued looking at transferable skills more than before'

'Would consider looking at other experience listed if they were a person recruiting'

The project reflected a positive outcome for both Young Adult Carers and employers who volunteered to be interviewed.

CareFree Young Carers Service - What Employers Want Project. Helena Mitchell, Team Manager.