

The Voices of
Young Carers
in Perth and Kinross

We are here,
we are wonderful
and we are strong



Contacts for more information

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Outside the Box is a voluntary organisation which carries out evaluations and provides community development support.

Part of the cost of this review was met from the Working Towards project, which is funded by the Big Lottery Fund. There is more information about this project on the Outside the Box website.

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Why we wrote this report

There are children and young people in every part of Scotland who take on the role of a carer. We usually do it because we love our families and we want to help. But being a young carer is often lonely and it can be hard work. Sometimes we need someone to talk to and to help us.

We helped write this report because we want people to know about what young carers do, and about the support we get from the Young Carers project.

There is a longer report from the independent evaluation on the [websites](#). This summary report was put together by:

- Young people from the Young Carers Project.
- Anne from Outside the Box who made sure that what is in the report is independent.

All the quotes in this report are from young carers apart from the ones that say they are from other people.

We want to thank everyone who gave their views and who helped.



Did you know?

Young carers are children and young people aged under 18 who provide care, assistance or support to another family member. They carry out caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility which would usually be associated with an adult.

About the project

The Perth and Kinross Young Carers project began in 1997. It is based in Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Services (PKAVS).

At summer 2010 the project has 4 full time members of staff. Stewart McFarlane is the Youth Services Manager. Raymond Jamieson is the Young Carers Project Coordinator. Lorri Millicamp began as link for the schools and is now a Young Carers Support Worker. Hannah Turrel is a Support Worker and Charlotte Nairn is a sessional Support Worker. There are 12 volunteers.

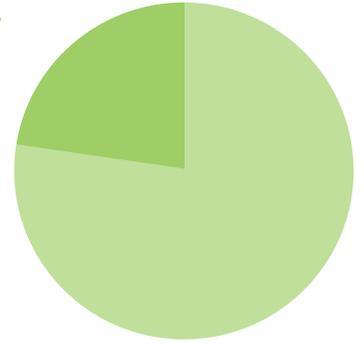
The funding for the project has built up over the years. But it has never been secure or predictable, so it is hard to plan ahead.

Budget for the project

Total: £90,000

Perth and Kinross Council: £24,000

Fundraising and charitable trusts: £66,000



Did you know?



The 2001 Census information shows there may be 16,500 - 17,000 young people in Scotland who would identify themselves as carers.

Fewer than 4,000 of them are known to services.

Surveys show that at least 10% of pupils in secondary schools have a role as a carer some of the time.

This means there are 100,000 young people in Scotland taking on a caring role.

There are around 2,000 young people in Perth and Kinross who may be carers.

Did you know?



These are some of the barriers and difficulties that young carers face - findings from the research

Young carers often have poorer health and wellbeing themselves.

Young carers often have less time for school and learning - for example, when they take time out to look after their relative, or spend time at that rather than on homework, or are tired when they are at school, or worry about what is happening at home and can't concentrate.

They have poorer prospects for qualifications and job opportunities. Sometimes this is because they missed out at school. But it is also because they may have less confidence and low expectations for themselves. Some young people expect that when they leave school they will spend a lot of their time as carers and will not be

able to leave home to go to college or a job in another town. So there is little point in working hard and having ambitions.

Young carers often have fewer friends at school or in their community. This means there are fewer people who are close to them as they grow up. This in turn makes their health and wellbeing more vulnerable in their adult lives.

"It provides a chance to be free of responsibility for a short while, lets you meet new people, and they provide a chance to see that things aren't as bad as they could be."

"Before I came to the Young Carers, I didn't know how to talk about the things that worried me."

"I want to be normal, even if it is just for one day."

"Sometimes we are too good at hiding it. But sometimes it's just because no-one asks."

They have contact with caring, supportive and understanding adults who take an interest in THEM and are able to talk/listen etc."

(Social worker)

"It gives them timeout/ respite from their situation where they can be children and not have all the responsibilities they normally carry."

(Teacher)

"The young carers project is somewhere for the children to go where they meet other children who are also young carers. They know they are not on their own."

(Social worker)

Did you know?

Young carers are a priority in government policies. These are some of the reports and policies that show why young carers and their families need different responses from services.

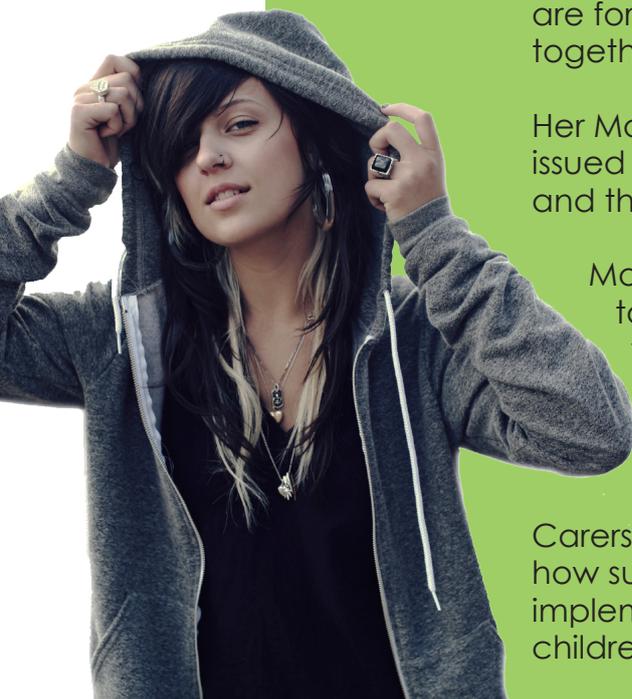
Care 21 is the national policy in Scotland on unpaid care. It was published in 2007. This was the first Government strategy to recognise young carers and make recommendations for us. One of the recommendations was that young carers should have a national forum. The Scottish Executive response identified young carers as one of 4 initial priorities for action. They have supported the annual Festival, which is our national forum.

Getting it right for every child is the national policy programme for all services for children. It aims to change the way adults think and act to help all children and young people grow, develop and reach their full potential. It includes services starting with the needs of each child, thinking about what the outcomes are for them. Services also need to be better at working together.

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) have issued a guide on improving services for young carers and their families.

More Choices, More Chances is the strategy to reduce the proportion of young people who are not getting into further education or employment.

In 2010 the Scottish Government published Caring Together, which is the Carers and Young Carers Strategy for Scotland 2010-2015. It shows how support for Young Carers is an essential part of implementing this strategy and other strategies for children and young people.

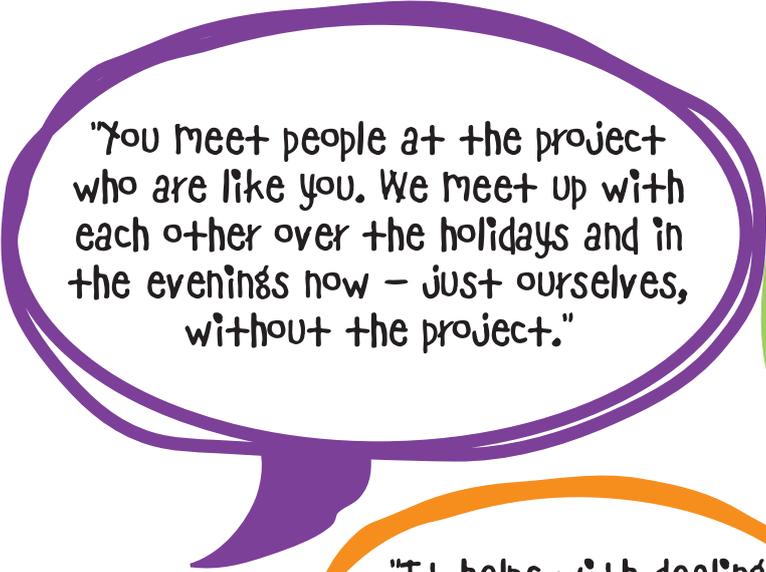


What the project does today

Support for young carers

At 2010 the support is:

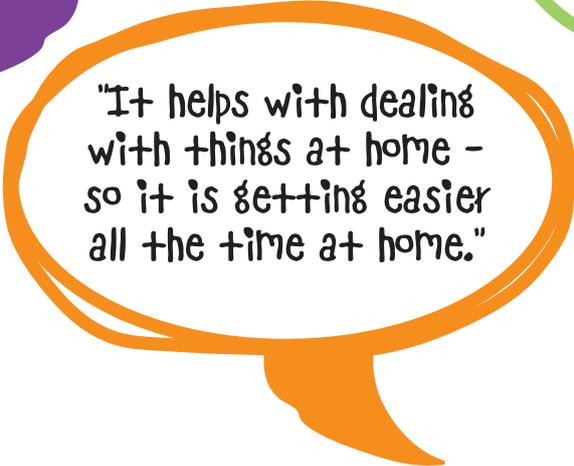
- Delivering a service to 75 young carers.
- 3 groups running throughout the year, including a Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
- There is a summer programme.
- The project provides residential weeks, which give 14 young people a break and time to explore new activities.
- The young carers' newsletter began in 2009: this is something we started and are doing ourselves.
- The project staff are working in partnerships with Social Work services, Education, young people's health services, Colleges and voluntary organisations. This way, they are helping other services make things better for us and they are indirectly meeting the needs of more people who are young carers.



"You meet people at the project who are like you. We meet up with each other over the holidays and in the evenings now – just ourselves, without the project."



"The best things about the project for me are:
1. It helps with home.
2: New experiences - the trips. 3: More friends."



"It helps with dealing with things at home - so it is getting easier all the time at home."

Example of a group

The Young Carers Mind and Body Club began in October 2008 and each block of sessions has built on feedback from the young people.

It has always had a mix of boys and girls, and has a wide age range - 9 to 16.

The focus of the group has changed over the sessions. It began with a focus on keeping active and learning some martial arts skills, and developed into a more general health and wellbeing group with games to stimulate your mind and body.

It is run by 3 volunteers who also provide transport for some of the people taking part.

This is what the young people say about the volunteers.

"They are easy to talk to."

"They are very fun and they are good at games"

"I would not be able to come if I didn't get a lift. We talk together in the car and I love going".

"I also feel that the volunteers enjoy it themselves, and that adds to the positive feeling afterwards."

"Add more games. Everything else is brilliant."

"I like getting to come and see everyone because I don't really get to go out that much."

"The nice and helpful volunteers and workers. When I have been sad they have helped me out."

"Being supported with my problems and fears."

"The staff always encourage you."

"Getting support, meeting new friends, having someone to talk to and build your confidence."

"I like getting out of the village and seeing my friends."

"It has helped me and my colleagues see how these young people are coping with situations where we would struggle. We no longer just see the disruptive behaviour. We understand the frustration that lies behind it, and respond in what I hope is a more supportive way." (Teacher)

"It isn't just the groups and the residentials, although that is what the young people talk most about. They also value the one-to-one support they get from the staff." (Social worker)

"I feel that one of the biggest impacts of the project is in building the confidence of young carers." (Worker at youth project)

The project now involves young people who used to get support as volunteers.

The project has also kept in touch with young people who have moved on to College or into work.

"I love being a volunteer."

There is also now more support from some local firms, for example Peter Vardy motor dealership. They have given money to help meet the cost of the summer residential. Their staff are getting involved in other ways too, such as coming as a volunteer to help and doing things that raise awareness about young carers.

"It makes me feel good when someone helps the project because it shows they think we matter."



Did you know?

The young carer project has given support to hundreds of young carers.

Staff have been in touch with over 12,000 young people through the schools when raising awareness about young carers and the issues they face.

Some of these young people will be carers themselves and others will know of friends who take on this role.

Support for families

The project staff also give support to families, when this is what the young carer wants.

- They will talk things over with mums and dads.
- They will come along to meetings with the staff who work in other services, to help the young carer and their mum or dad explain what support they need.
- They will help families and the services they use find solutions to problems.

"I like the way staff remember what helps my mum."

"There have been times when the project has been helping a young carer but in practice it extends to helping their parents too. Their support to a pupil and to the lad's mum has been invaluable in helping them both explain what was difficult in a situation. That helped the school respond in a fair and constructive way." (Teacher)

Support for schools and other organisations

This is what the project does to help other organisations give good support to the young people who are carers who use their services.

- Staff from the project go to the Integrated Team Meetings at every secondary school in Perth and Kinross.
- Staff give individual support and advice to schools. This can be focussed on the needs of one child or family. Or it can be on a more general matter.
- If they cannot always manage meetings they will give advice by phone and emails.
- They give advice to other young people's services, again usually around support for an individual young person.

"When I took on my current job it opened my eyes to young people who are carers. Teachers need to use different ways of working with these young people because they often have different learning needs - it's not like the other young people who we know have additional learning needs because we can see their disability or whatever. But we need help to get it right, which is where this project comes in." (Teacher)

"Our pupils are more aware of issues around caring as a result of staff's input to assemblies. I know that some young people go along and speak to her at the monthly drop in sessions too." (Teacher)

"The staff had helped me a lot, both in giving individual pupils more support and in helping other children who are young carers. I feel that I and my colleagues are better able to do our jobs because the Young Carers project is there to advise and assist us." (Teacher)

Contributing to wider plans for children and young people in Perth and Kinross and in Scotland

This is what the project does to contribute to wider plans.

- The project is part of planning for young people in Perth and Kinross.
- We are on national working groups that the Scottish Government has set up to develop policies and practice guidance to reflect the needs of young carers.

"I feel that the Young Carers project don't always get the recognition that they deserve for all the work that they do with children. Thankfully things are starting to improve in this area and other professionals are now taking more notice of the work they do with children/young people and the importance of that work."

(Social worker)

"Our project has made more people know about young carers and remember about us."

"When I went to College the staff there knew about young carers, so it was easier for me to say I might need a bit of extra support sometimes. That's because of the project."



Did you know?

John Swinney is the local MSP for the area. The project got in touch with him and he became a strong supporter of the project and of young carers. He raised the issue of national support for young carers in the Scottish Parliament. There was a debate in the Parliament in October 2004, which raised the profile of young carers, which in turn had a big impact on the Scottish policy context.

The children and young people at our project took part in the consultation that led to the Care 21 report.

The Scottish Government has helped with the costs of the Festival, which brings together young carers from all over Scotland as part of Care 21. But the idea came from us when we organised the Extravaganza in 2005.

So our Young Carers project has helped make things better for young carers all over Scotland!

How we want support for young carers to develop in the future

These are the ways we want the Young Carers project to develop.

We need more funding to keep the project going. It is a big worry when the project doesn't know what is happening year to year.

It needs to be able to give support to more young people.

One of the things we enjoy is giving something back. The project should go on having opportunities for young people to contribute.

We need action by other people and services. It is not enough for the schools and other services to know that someone is a young carer. They need to give that child the support they need. And the project needs to be there to help them do that.

The young carers project should keep on working with schools and youth projects and lots of other groups to raise awareness about young carers. That way, children and young people who are young carers will know they are not alone.

The services that support our mums and dads or brothers and sisters because they are ill or disabled should get better at remembering to ask about young carers in the family. They could do a lot more to help us too.

"Some schools are fantastic at supporting young carers. Others could do better. We want every school to be good at this."

"Schools need to make it more visible. It should be talked about in every class. There should be posters in places like the corridors and the waiting room. And you need to repeat it several times each year."

"When I leave young carers I really want to help with the project."

"I want it to continue to help people in my situation. And to let me volunteer to help."

"I would want to meet up more with the staff to talk more."

"Getting help with school or getting bullied. And a bit of one-to-one time with someone about personal things - for me and for other people."

"The more funding the project gets, the more young carers and the staff and volunteers at the project will be able to help other people."

"The project coming to more locations."

Is there anything you would change? "Be able to support more young carers and to raise more awareness!"

"We need to build on the work that the staff have started. In our school we are feeling more confident as well as better aware of the needs of young carers. But there is much more to do. I look forward to many years of partnership work with the project." (Teacher)

"It would be a great loss to us and especially to our pupils if the young carers project was not there to support young people individually and through the drop-ins that happen here."
(Teacher)



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