

## The Scottish Young Carers Festival Report 2008



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## **1. Executive Summary**

This report provides a summary of the development of the first ever Scottish Young Carers Festival that took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2008 and the consultation that took place during the festival.

The Future of Unpaid Care in Scotland, Care 21 report made 22 recommendations that would aim to improve the lives of Scottish carers. Recommendation 2 was related to young carers specifically stating that a national forum for young carers should be established and be supported by a young carers strategy. At the time the Scottish Government decided not to adopt a young carers strategy but supported the need for a national young carers forum. A national multi agency task group was established to look at how a national forum could work and be set up. The task group decided that a forum as an annual festival would be most appropriate model for engaging young carers. It was decided that the aim of the first festival should be to consult with the young carers and ask if this would be their preferred format.

England has been having an annual young carers festival since 2000 and Wales have also held two young carers festivals. The festivals allowed the young people to meet and influence key decision makers whilst providing respite from their caring responsibilities.

The Minister for Public Health announced funding over a two year period to establish the festival. Various different national carer and children organisations such as The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance, Shared Care Scotland, Barnardo's and NCH Scotland, came together to form a steering group to work in partnership to take the Festival forward. It was agreed by the steering group that The Princess Royal Trust for Carers would take the lead on the project and submit the funding application for the festival and appoint a Festival Coordinator and Festival Administrative Assistant. It was decided that the post of administrative assistant should be offered to a young carer or former young carer.

The aim of the festival was to bring 500 Scottish young carers together in a 24 hour event that would allow the young carers to highlight the issues important to them and have the opportunity to engage with key decision makers to influence the decisions and policies that affect them. It would also allow young carers to meet young people in similar situations, have a break from their caring responsibilities and raise awareness and recognition of young carers on a national platform. Section 8 outlines how these aims and objectives were met from the feedback received from young carers.

The festival coordinator and administrative assistant came into post in January 2008 and alongside the Steering Group began to shape and develop the Festival. After visiting potential venues the Broomlee Centre in West Linton was booked for the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2008. The festival coordinator visited young carers groups from within the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance to inform the young carers of the festival and its aims. The young carers were able to share their thoughts and ideas on the festival and these were built into the festival programme. The coordinator kept in regular contact with members of the Alliance to keep them informed on the progress of the festival.

The festival coordinator was able to meet with the English and Welsh coordinators to share good practice and lessons learned so as to apply them to a Scottish setting. One of the most successful elements of the English festival was having its own radio station. It was decided that this would work well within a Scottish setting but should be facilitated by a group of young carers. Shared Care Scotland and the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance received funding for a group of young carers aged between 16-18 years to receive media training. Eleven young carers from across Scotland spent a week working with Media Education to develop media skills. Ten of the young people who received the training used this training to help run the festival radio station, interviewing the other young carers and Minister for Public Health and Minister for Children and Early Years.

As one of the main aims of the festival was to allow the young carers to engage with key decision makers, a programme was developed to allow a specific time slot within the festival for this; a political speed dating session was chosen as the format for this engagement. Invitations were sent out in May to all MSP's and other key decision makers. 16 invited guests attended the festival including two Scottish Ministers - the Minister for Public Health and the Minister for Children and Early Years. Both participated in this face to face engagement with the young carers, allowing them to hear directly from the young people the issues important to them and what they would like to see happen with regards to future young carers policies.

The main issues raised at the festival were:

- \* The need for secure long term funding for young carers projects who support them.
- \* Increased awareness and understanding of young carers and support they need within schools.
- \* Increased awareness and understanding of young carers and support they need from GP's.
- \* Increased awareness and understanding of young carers and support they need from Social Workers.
- \* Need for an annual Scottish Young Carers Festival.
- \* Young Carers to receive national recognition, respect and understanding.

When asked on their preferred format for a national young carers forum the most popular choices were for an annual festival and representatives from young carers projects to come together bi-monthly in a central location.

Lorna Goodwin  
Scottish Young Carers Festival Coordinator  
7<sup>th</sup> November 2008

## 2. **Background and Policy Context**

2.1 'The Future of Unpaid Care in Scotland' a report commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2006, made 22 recommendations to improve the lives of carers in Scotland. Recommendation 2 from the report specifically referred to young carers, and stated that a national forum representing the views of young carers be established and supported by a young carers strategy.

2.2 In their response to the reports recommendations, Scottish Ministers and Government decided that they would not adopt the recommendation for a young carers strategy, but rather have a strategic focus and mainstream support through existing children and young people's policy frameworks such as 'Getting It Right for Every Child', integrated children's service plans and joint inspections. Young carers would be supported in schools through the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.

2.3 Scottish Ministers and Government also recognised the need to hear the voice of young carers and identified them as one of the priority areas they would take forward. A national multi-agency task group was established to assess the potential role and implications of a national young carer forum.

2.4 In February 2007, the multi agency task group considered evidence presented by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers national young carers co-coordinator, and concluded that the model of a forum as an annual festival may be the most effective mechanism in engaging young carers. The group felt that young carers themselves should make the decision on what sort of format a national forum should take, and so the first festival should be staged with the main purpose of consulting directly with young carers on this issue.

2.5 This festival model is based on a similar event held annually in England which provides young carers with the opportunity to meet with MPs to influence government and other stakeholders as well as providing a break from caring. Representatives from young carers projects in Scotland have attended this festival and say there is a need for a separate such event to allow young carers a voice in Scotland to influence the decisions which affect them.

2.6 In June 2007 the Minister for Public Health, announced funding of £200,000 over a two-year period to establish the festival. The Minister said "This festival will provide young carers with the opportunity to meet with decision-makers, including MSP's, to have their say on the issues that affect them. "

## 2. Funding Application and Management of the Project

2.7 Scottish Government invited national carer and children's organisations to jointly agree a funding application that would deliver an overnight festival for young carers which would help inform the format of a future national forum for young carers in Scotland.

2.8 Representatives from national carer and children's organisations formed a steering group to discuss ways of jointly taking this project forward. The following organisations were represented on the steering group:

Children 1<sup>st</sup>

The Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

Carers Scotland

Shared Care Scotland

Barnardo's

NCH Scotland

It was agreed that The Princess Royal Trust for Carers should act as the lead agency, and submit a funding application to develop and deliver the young carers festival. This would be facilitated by the appointment of a Young Carers Festival Coordinator who would be employed by The Trust. The steering group also felt it was important to involve a young carer or former young carer in the administrative work for the project. Funding was therefore sought for two posts and delivery of the event. A breakdown of the full budget is given in appendix 1.

### **3. Festival Objectives and Anticipated Outcomes**

3.1 The objectives for the Scottish Young Carers Festival were as follows:

- \* To work joint with young carers, national carer organisations and national forums to plan and deliver a young carers festival event in Scotland.
- \* To deliver a 24 hour residential festival event for 500 young carers in Scotland in September 2008.
- \* Use a variety of methods to consult with young carers to inform the future shape and format of a national young carers forum in Scotland.
- \* Produce a written report on the festival event providing feedback from participants and other stakeholders highlighting the range of options identified for the future format of a national forum in Scotland.

3.2 The outcomes that were anticipated from the festival were as follows:

- \* Young carers would have a break from their caring situation
- \* Young carers would have fun and they would meet other young carers from all over Scotland
- \* Young carers would be able to highlight some of the key issues that are of concern to them
- \* Young carers would be given a greater voice and would influence and shape the future development of a national young carers forum in Scotland.
- \* Publicity and awareness of the needs of young carers would lead to more young people identifying themselves as young carers.

Section 8 provides feedback from the engagement and consultation with young carers and evidence of these outcomes being met.

#### **4 The Festival Steering Group**

4.1 The festival steering group played a vital role in collectively helping to shape and inform the development of the festival. This group met regularly, bringing together a diverse range of experience and knowledge to positively inform the development of the project.

4.2 The festival steering group is made up of several carer and national children's organisations. The group first met in August 2007 and has continued to meet bi-monthly since. Email communication was used to keep the group up to date with progress of Festival between meetings. The membership of the steering group is as follows:

Lorna Goodwin – The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

Ruth Clark- The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

Louise Morgan- The Princess Royal Trust for Carers/ Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance

Don Williamson- Shared Care Scotland

Stewart McFarlane – Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance

Sean Harkins- NCH Scotland

Selwyn McCausland – Barnardo's

Katie Alexander – Children 1<sup>st</sup>

Fiona Collie – Carers Scotland

4.3 Using the development plan the coordinator produced a workplan which was agreed within the steering group. The steering group also validated the programme for the festival, programme for invited guests and the risk assessment. (see appendix 2.)

## **Development of Event**

### **5. Consultation with young carers, project staff and young carers forums to shape content.**

- 5.1 The coordinator attended quarterly Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance meetings in February, May and August to inform and involve young carers projects workers in the development of the festival. The Alliance is the network of young carers projects in Scotland.
- 5.2 Between Alliance meetings the coordinator kept the projects up to date through emails, meetings and phone calls. Alliance members were able to feedback their ideas/opinions on what they thought would make festival run smoothly from a workers perspective and pass on contact details of suppliers etc they had used.
- 5.3 The Festival Coordinator visited **nineteen** young carer projects to inform the young carers about the Festival and its aims. This was also an opportunity to consult the young people on their ideas and thoughts around the Festival and use these in the development of the programme.
- 5.4 Topics covered in each group discussion were:
- 1 Why festival was taking place
  - 2 What they thought a festival was
  - 3 What activities etc would they like to see at their festival.
- The Welsh Young Carers Festival DVD was also shown so as to set the scene for the young people.
- 5.5 The young people shared their ideas and opinions of what they would like to see happening at the Scottish Young Carers Festival and this formed the development of the Festival programme.
- 5.6 The groups were also asked to think about
- 3 Decision makers they would like invited to the Festival
  - 4 Questions they would like to ask decision makers in regards to young carers.
  - 5 What are the top 3 issues they think are most important for young carers in Scotland today.
  - 6 Within their groups design a logo that could be used as festival logo.

## **Shared learning with English and Welsh Festival**

5.7 England have run an annual young carers festival since 2000, this is jointly produced by the YMCA Fairthorne Manor and The Children's Society. Wales have also run two young carers festivals.

5.8 The coordinator met the English and Welsh coordinators in February. The purpose of this was to draw on the good practice and lessons learned from previous festivals and apply them to the development of the Scottish Festival. Phone and email correspondence was maintained in the run up to the Scottish Festival.

5.9 The Coordinator and Festival Administrative Assistant attended the English Young Carers Festival in June 2008. This allowed them to see the Festival in action and speak to various people involved in the Festival to pick up different tips and pointers. The English Coordinators in return attended the Scottish Young Carers Festival.

5.10 When booking the venue for the Festival, Coordinator was advised that the Boys Brigade also used the centre for an annual festival. The coordinator met with the organiser of the BB Crossover festival who were able to advise on various different suppliers and contractors they used and who knew the site, were good value for money and reliable. The Festival Coordinator and administrative assistant were able to attend the Boys Brigade Festival to see the venue in use and the layout of marquees, inflatable equipment and tents.

## Venue, equipment and activities, based on risk assessment

5.11 The festival steering group adopted the risk assessment framework used by Crossroads for the Isle of Man Young Carers Festival. The risk assessment was very comprehensive and it was felt would transfer well to a Scottish Festival. A list of questions and requirements were complied by the Festival Coordinator and approved by the Steering Group for visiting potential sites for the Festival. (See appendix 3)

5.12 After visiting several potential venues it was decided that the Broomlee Centre in West Linton would be the best site for the Festival. It is self contained, offered both indoor and outdoor accommodation and has public transport links from Edinburgh. The Broomlee Centre offers a wide range of outdoor activities which are all fully risk assessed, is registered with the AALA and is often used by schools and youth groups. Another major attraction for using the Broomlee Centre was that it hosts an annual Boys Brigade Festival and is therefore used to having and catering for large numbers on site and were happy for us to bring outside contractors on site to provide additional activities.

5.13 After the venue was booked the Festival Coordinator and Administrative Assistant visited the site to complete a full risk assessment. This was then agreed alongside the Steering Group and shared with the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance.

5.14 When booking contractors for the festival contractors were used that came recommended by Young Carers groups within the Alliance and the Boys Brigade. All activities that were commissioned, met the risk assessment.

## **Publicity/ Information Materials.**

5.15 An information pack about the festival and its aim and objectives was produced for young carers and distributed through the Alliance. This could be used by young carer workers to inform discussions with their group and share with parents.(see appendix 4) A publicity flyer informing and publicising the festival was created and distributed through the steering group and the Alliance.( see appendix 5)

5.16 A comprehensive booking pack was designed for young carers workers to provide as much information as possible on the festival and allow them to secure a booking for their group.(see appendix 6) A leaflet for young carers workers was fashioned and sent out prior to the festival to give them information and instructions on procedures for arriving on the festival site. (see appendix 7) A festival programme for the young carers and workers was distributed as groups registered at the festival. (see appendix 8)

5.17 Information about the Festival also featured on the national Young Scot website, Young Scot WOW website and youngcarers.net. A full breakdown of media coverage of the festival is covered in section 8.

## **6. Festival programme and consultation mechanisms used. (Including pre-event discussion/preparation with local groups.)**

6.1 The festival programme was shaped through the visits to the young carers groups during the development of the festival. The programme represented the ideas and suggestions of the young carers and Alliance members. The programme offered the young carers the opportunity to have fun, try new activities and meet other young carers from all across Scotland. The programme also allowed the young carers to highlight the issues that are important to them and engage with key decision makers raising awareness and gaining national recognition for Scottish Young Carers.

6.2 At the festival various consultation methods were used. There was a dedicated area referred to as the Consultation Zone. This area was open throughout the Festival and allowed the young people to come in and leave messages and opinions regarding young carers. These are discussed in section 8. The festival also had its own radio station which was run by a group of young carers who had undertaken media training. (See below.) The young carers who undertook this training worked as roving reporters at the festival and recorded audio messages around the festival site from the young carers. The media group interviewed Shona Robison, Minister for Public Health and Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years. They also helped to film and edit the festival DVD.

6.3 The young carers were able to participate in a political speed dating session with the decision makers who attended the Festival. The speed dating format was decided on after it was suggested by a young carer from the east end of Glasgow and allowed the young carers to engage with the decision makers in a fun and informal manner. The decision makers were also able to hear directly from the young carers themselves about issues that were important to them. (see appendix 9)

6.4 The views of the young carers and young carers leaders were captured in an evaluation questionnaire at the end of the festival. (See appendix 10) The results of this questionnaire are discussed in section 8.

6.5 Prior to the festival the Festival Coordinator facilitated a Planning Day with the young carers workers bringing groups to the festival to help prepare the workers and the young people for attendance at the festival. The planning day was held at The Princess Royal Trust for Carers offices in Glasgow. The day focused on:

- \* Festival programme
- \* Roles and responsibilities at the festival
- \* Topics to discuss with the young people before attendance at the festival.
- \* Workshop on how to prepare project/young carers/parent/guardians for the festival.

## **Training for Young Carers with Media Education**

- 6.6 The steering group had discussed that one method of consultation could be roving microphones around the festival site, and that the best results might be achieved if young carers themselves took on the task of being peer interviewers.
- 6.7 A successful element of the English festival had been a dedicated radio station or the event. This was also an activity where the steering group saw young carers being able to be hugely participative.
- 6.8 Shared Care Scotland in partnership with the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance had been awarded funding from youth strategy monies to run a residential training course for older young carers (aged 16-18) to develop media related skills. This was also a respite opportunity.
- 6.9 Meetings took place with the training provider, Media Education, in March to develop a programme with a view to running the residential during the Easter holiday break in April.
- 6.10 The offer of training was open to all projects within the Alliance. Eleven young people took part in the residential at Badaguish near Aviemore. The geographical areas represented were Glasgow, Angus, Edinburgh and the Borders. Shared Care Scotland, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance staff supervised the participants throughout the week.
- 6.11 The five day programme included:
- outdoor activities led by the staff at the centre
  - a visit to Speysound Community radio station where they guested on the Wednesday evening Community Rodeo programme
  - activities to develop interview skills, both behind and in front of camera
  - activities to encourage the young carers to think about how they present the issues around being a young carer
  - discussions on how they might use their new skills to be involved in the festival with the festival coordinator.
  - a chance to meet other young carers from different areas
  - filming to produce a DVD of the week's activities.
- 6.12 During the time between the residential and the festival, some of the young carers visited the Media Education studios to help with editing the DVD of the event at Badaguish.
- 6.13 Out of the 11 participants on the training residential, 10 participated in running the festival radio station.

6.14 The radio station run by the young people was perhaps was one of the most successful elements of the festival. The media skills developed through the media training are transferable and can be adapted to a work / educational setting enhancing employment opportunities for the young carers.

## **7. Attendees- an outline of young carers and other stakeholders attending.**

7.1 There are 48 Young Carers groups in the Scottish young carers Services Alliance, 37 of these groups participated in the festival. The groups are as follows:

Aberdeen City  
Aberdeen North  
Aberdeen South  
Angus  
North Ayrshire  
South Ayrshire  
Borders  
Dumfries and Galloway  
East Dunbartonshire  
Dundee  
Edinburgh Young Carers  
Broomhouse Young Carers  
Falkirk and Clackmannanshire  
Fife  
Glasgow West  
Glasgow North West  
Glasgow East End  
Glasgow South East  
GAMH  
Glasgow North East  
Pollock  
Glasgow South West  
Glasgow North  
TYKES- East Sutherland  
Highland - Inverness  
Inverclyde  
North Lanarkshire  
South Lanarkshire  
Midlothian  
West Lothian  
Moray  
North Argyll  
Perth and Kinross  
Renfrewshire  
East Renfrewshire  
Scottish Huntington's Association  
Stirling

7.2 At the festival there were several different youth organisations invited to attend to provide information on the support and resources they can provide young carers/young people. The organisations that were in attendance:

Caledonian Youth  
Govan Law Centre  
MS Society  
Scottish Youth Parliament  
Young Scot

7.3 The decision makers were invited to attend the festival on Sunday 14th of September between 11am and 1pm. Those guests who attended were:

Shona Robison - Minister for Public Health  
Adam Ingram- Minister for Children and Early Year  
Alasdair Morgan – MSP, South of Scotland SNP  
Aileen Campbell – MSP, South of Scotland, SNP  
Christine Grahame- MSP- South of Scotland, SNP  
Jeremy Purvis- MSP, Tweeddale, Ettrach and Laudedale- Liberal Democrat  
Alan.G.Baird, Director of Social Work Dundee and President of Association of Directors of Social Work  
Simon Parsons- Head of BBC Children's  
Peter Stapleton, Community Care Division, Scottish Government  
Jeff Hamilton- Councillor, Moray, Independent  
Nicky Campbell, Commissioning and Review East Ayrshire Council  
Anne Donaldson, Learning and Leisure Services, North Lanarkshire Council  
Suzanne Thomson, Service Manager Community Care, Falkirk Council  
Christina Burnett- Support to Children and Young People, Edinburgh City Council  
Kristopher McKee – Big Lottery  
Stella Everingham- Head of Children Services and Criminal Justice, Borders Council

7.4 The festival would not have been able to run without the hard work and efforts of the fifteen Festival volunteers who donated in kind their time. There were a number of volunteers from organisations including The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Shared Care Scotland. There was also a volunteer from Worcester Young Carers Project who had heard about the Scottish Festival through the attendance of the Co-ordinator at the English Young Carers Festival. As was agreed within the Steering Group all volunteers were Disclosure checked.

## **8. Consultation feedback from young carers**

This section is a report on how the outcomes of the festival were met and the issues raised by the young carers at the Festival.

### **Outcome 1- Young Carers would have a break from their caring responsibilities.**

8.1 The festival allowed those young carers who attended not only the opportunity to engage with key decision makers and voice their opinion on the issues that directly affect them but also offered respite from their caring responsibilities. The young people were able to participate in different activities or chill out and relax with the other young people on the site. When asked what was their favorite part of the festival was several of the young people stated that it was this opportunity to have a break.

- **'The chance to get a break, meet up with pals, talk with like minded people.'**
- **'Gave us the chance to relax and not feel judged or stress.'**
- **'To get a break from your family and get to meet people your age.'**
- 

8.2 When asked what they would change about the festival there were a lot of requests to see this break increased by having the festival run for a longer period of time.

- **'Make it for 2 nights.'**
- **'2 nights.'**
- **'Have it for least a week long.'**

Outcome 2- Young Carers would have fun and they would meet other young carers from all over Scotland.

8.3 Through the festival programme young carers were given the opportunity to participate in lots of different activities. These activities ran on a drop-in basis allowing the young people to try as many or little activities as they wished. The festival programme reflected the activities requested by the young carers groups visited by the Festival Coordinator during the development of the festival. For a lot of the young people their favorite parts of the festival was being able take part in the activities and have fun.

- **'Samba drum, bouncy castle, bungee run, disco, karaoke, hanging about with my group.'**
- **'Opportunity to have fun and get messy.'**
- **'Having fun with my group.'**
- **'Having a laugh with others.'**

8.4 37 groups from the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance attended the festival, allowing the young carers to mix and meet other young carers from all across the country. Groups from Golspie, Sutherland down to the Borders represented the young carers' voice in Scotland, allowing the young carers in attendance to meet, chat and make friends with other young people in similar situations.

- **'From the festival I got to chill out with people who understood me and I had great fun. I made lots of new friends.'**
- **'Meeting new people from other places in Scotland with the same problems as me.'**
- **'Mixing with others who deal with similar problems.'**
- **'I loved meeting all the young carers.'**
- **'We had a chance to meet other young carers and have our say.'**
- **'It helps a lot to meet people with the same situation.'**

Outcome 3- Young Carers would be able to highlight some of the key issues that are of concern to them.

8.5 At the festival there was a specific area called the 'Consultation Zone' where the young people could visit and leave messages and opinions under various headings. Some of the comments left by the young people are included in this section of the report. The consultation zone was open throughout the Festival and ran on a drop-in basis following the advice of the English and Welsh Festival coordinators.

These headings/questions included

- **What would you like us to tell Teachers about being a young carer? What support do you need from schools and teachers?**

**No of comments posted – 56**

8.6 The young carers felt that there was a lack of awareness, understanding and empathy from teachers of young carers and what they do. This leads them to feel there is no support system within school for young carers.

The main points that were raised under this heading are as follows:

- **'I would like teachers to understand young carers more.'**
- **'Understand and go easy on me, give me more support.'**
- **'More support and understand what we are going through.'**
- **'That it is difficult and stressful.'**
- **'Understanding from the teachers.'**
- **'That it is difficult and they need to try and understand what we go through.'**
- **'It's hard for young carers and they should learn more about it.'**
- **'That life's not as straight forward for us and that we can't always deal with it the way they can!'**

8.7 They want teachers and schools to understand that with their caring responsibilities at home that it means they are less able to meet homework deadlines and this adds to the pressure already on them.

- **'To help us with homework and know why we are off and understand.'**
- **'Please understand what goes on at home, our lives don't revolve around school work. It's not easy being us.'**
- **'I need help with school deadlines.'**
- **'Homework deadlines are hard work when you are a young carer.'**
- **'To understand that sometimes it is hard to focus and to not get in trouble for homework.'**
- **'That sometimes you can't do your homework but you still get told off.'**
- **'Give us more time for homework to be handed in and to be easy on us.'**
- **'Give us a break, if we can't do our homework. It's hard, try and understand, don't expect too much.'**

8.8 For those young carers whose teachers were aware that they had caring responsibilities there is still a feeling of lack of understanding of what this role may involve and lack of discretion in front of their classmates.

- **'Teachers need to stop talking about home life in front of friends.'**
- **'Stop treating us as if we are mentally unstable. Just because we have problems doesn't mean we're constantly on the verge of a breakdown.'**
- **'Give us a break when you know that there are difficulties at home.'**
- **'Be lenient on late work etc without singling us out, we work as hard as it is.'**

**When asked 'who else needs to help you and your family 58% of those who responded indicated teachers/schools.'**

### Question

- **What would you like us to tell Social Workers about being a young carer?  
What can Social Workers do to help you and your family more?**

**No of comments posted- 54**

8.9 From the comments left under this heading by the young people there seems to be a certain amount of stigma attached to receiving support from social services.

- **'Social workers never help.'**
- **'Social services ruin lives.'**
- **'Social services have ruined my life.'**
- **'Follow their promises and stop breaking them.'**

8.10 Young carers who are engaged with social services wanted to let them know that they do need their help and support. In particular some young carers felt that social work should be linking in with their school and informing them of their caring role.

- **'Its hard and we need support.'**
- **'It's hard looking after mum and dad.'**
- **'Let us help and don't tell us to get lost.'**
- **'Help and be open minded.'**
- **'Would like social workers to help with family issues.'**
- **'Ask us what help we need.'**
- **'Being supported when needed not when it suits social workers.'**
- **'Let schools know!'**
- **'Make schools more aware of young carers.'**

8.11 There were also comments with regards to carer's assessments and how they feel there is no action taken from this.

- **'Nothing happens when you get assessed as a Young Carer.'**
- **'The few young carers who have had social work assessments have basically been ignored. I think that social workers believe they have parents for support, but it's really kids whose situations are changing more quickly. So shouldn't they have more support? Parents lives don't alter so much daily, weekly etc.'**

<p><b>When asked 'who else needs to help you and your family 14% of those who responded indicated social workers.</b></p>
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### Question

- **What would you like us to tell GPs about being a young carer? What can GP's do to help you and your family more?**

No of comments posted – 41

8.12 The young carers who left messages under this heading wanted some recognition and understanding from GPs of what their needs are and what a young carer is. They want GPs to recognise and acknowledge the role they play within the family.

- **'Listen to me'**
- **'To try and help and give advice.'**
- **'To understand me and my family and to do something about it'**
- **'We need more support'**
- **'Why do you push social services in our faces using them as a cheap and useless alternative to actually listening to us?'**
- **'Explain more to us about what's wrong with the people we love.'**
- **'Think about the carer not just the patient.'**

8.13 Some of the young people left messages with regards to the caring needs. In particular young people who are caring for someone with specific health needs such as Huntington's disease felt there was a lack of knowledge from their GP about the disease.

- **'My dad has huntingtons disease (HD). I don't think my doctor has a good understanding of HD. This doesn't fill me with confidence. Maybe GPs should have to study HD at University it is only generally spoke about in one class and not covered in depth.'**
- **'To get a better understanding of each individual's situation and take backgrounds into account. Not to treat everything generally.'**
- **'That when we go to them and have problems or feel depressed, understand. We are genuine and just because we are young we can still suffer!'**

8.14 Young carers have a huge amount of responsibility which can have an impact on their own health, leading to many feeling stressed.

- **'I get stressed.'**
- **'Stress is an effect of young carers.'**
- **'Stress affects us too!'**
- **'Be more supportive.'**
- **'Help with our own illness as well as the person we care for.'**
- **'If we are stressed they understand and understand why we worry.'**

<p><b>When asked 'who else needs to help you and your family 25% of those who responded indicated GP's.</b></p>
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### Question

- **What could the Government do to support young carers?**

#### No of comments posted –64

8.16 The overwhelmingly response from the young carers is the need for long term secure funding for the projects who support them. This may be the only the support the young people receive and their only opportunity of respite from their caring responsibilities.

- **'The government needs to give more funding to aid the development of young carers groups.'**
- **'I would like to see more funding for young carers from the government.'**
- **'Use the money we save the government on us! £7.68 billion.'**
- **'Help us with what we do.'**
- **'Spend more money on young carers.'**
- **'More funding, more support- UNDERSTAND.'**
- **'Find more young carers workers, make groups more than fortnightly and give them more funding.'**
- **'Young carers groups more frequent and more money.'**
- **'Secure funding for young carers.'**

<p><b>When asked who supports you and your family of those who responded 94% said it was their young carer project.</b></p>
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8.17 Among the responses of what the Government could do to support young carers was a large volume of asks for another Scottish Young Carers Festival.

- **'More Scottish Young Carers Festivals!!'**
- **'Have more Festivals.'**
- **'FESTIVAL NEXT YEAR PLEASE'**
- **'More young carers festival.'**
- **'More funding for things like this, actually listen and keep promises for a change.'**
- **'Have more Scottish Young Carers Festivals for young carers to get together.'**

There were also suggestions of young carers receiving financial support or subsidised activities.

- **'Why don't we have benefits for young carers?'**
- **'We need more support without a job.'**
- **'Free or subsidised entry to sport's and leisure facilities for all young carers.'**
- **'Why can't young people get a carers allowance while in full time education? They do some job!'**

### **Question**

- **What would you like to see change for young carers in Scotland?**

**No of responses- 74**

8.18 The responses under this section reflect what was a reoccurring theme in the Consultation Zone and throughout the Festival.

#### More funding for young carers

- **More help to support the projects, so they can help more people!**
- **'More financial help.'**
- **'Our group has been off a lot due to funding- more funding!'**
- **'More funding for young carers projects so that young carers have something to look forward to.'**

#### More young carer festivals

- **'Have an YC festival every year.'**
- **'Festivals.'**
- **'More carers festivals.'**
- **More festivals!!!'**
- **Meet more young carers and have more young carers festivals.'**

#### More awareness and understanding of young carers and their issues from teachers/social work/GP's/Government.

- **'I would like young carers to be treated with some respect.'**
- **'More people to understand and to help.'**
- **'More awareness of what a young carer is.'**
- **'I would like to see young carers in Scotland more widely recognised.'**
- **'We want more understanding from teachers and officials.'**
- **'More attention for young carers.'**
- **'Teachers at school more aware that you are a young carer.'**
- **'The Government should listen to young carers needs. Things should change by what we need.'**

## Heading

- **Write a wish on the wish tree for young carers.**

**No of responses – 63**

8.19 The wish wall allowed the young people to write whatever they wished for themselves / young carers / their families. Again a lot of what has been mentioned under the above headings was repeated here. Young carers who responded wanted to see more help and support for them in their caring role.

- **'Make my life easier.'**
- **'I wish for an easy life and stuff.'**
- **'To make life easier and listen.'**
- **'I wish young carers didn't have so much responsibility.'**
- **'I wish to have super powers.'**

Included in the wish wall was a call for awareness raising around young carers and the issues they face.

- **'I wish school and other people could try and understand.'**
- **'I would love to be understood and to show people what we actually do.'**
- **'It would be a lot easier if people understood what we go through.'**
- **'I would love to be understood and to show people what we actually do.'**
- **'Teachers to have awareness and to understand.'**
- **'I wish young carers didn't have so much responsibility.'**
- **'I wish all young carers support and recognition for their caring role.'**

Some of the other messages that were left on the wish wall included:

- **'I wish for a carer's allowance.'**
- **'I wish that my mum and dad get more help from social workers and GPs and family and friends.'**
- **'I wish there was a festival every year.'**
- **'I wish that the Scottish Festivals should keep running.'**
- **'Have a day e.g. once a month for YC to have off school to chill out and talk.'**
- **'I wish all young carers to go out at least one night a week to get some respite from caring.'**
- **'I wish more research would go to mental health especially bipolar.'**
- **'More funding and a place to chill out and meet more young carers in a local area.'**

## **Heading**

- **Young Carers Leaders have their say.**

8.20 The young carers leaders who attended the festival were also given the opportunity to have their say as they are the people working with and supporting the young carers on a daily basis and are seeing the issues on a first hand basis.

- **‘Agencies should work together and remember who is important here. Future adults!’**
- **‘Join up thinking with teachers, social workers and nursing staff.’**
- **‘If carers save the government/NHS etc over £7billion a year can we have of that £ to support young carers?’**
- **‘Why does social work not even know they are responsible for fulfilling the right of young carers to have a carers assessment!’**
- **‘Young carers give so much and ask for so little, show them the respect they deserve!!’**
- **‘Core funding in order to provide consistent and supportive projects as a long term investment!’**
- **‘A serious commitment by the Government and local authorities and to support young carers, they are the people we need to invest in. Secure long term funding to enable carers centre’s to support young carers.’**
- **‘Why don’t GPs ask patients if they have children and young people and then refer them to carer’s projects like they are supposed to with adult carers?’**
- **‘More joint working between social work, health, education and voluntary sector.’**
- **‘Listen to YCs, include YCs and understand YCs.’**

Outcome 4- Young Carers would be given a greater voice and would influence and shape the future development of a national young carers forum in Scotland.

8.21 On the Sunday 15 invited guests attended the festival. These guests were made up of Scottish Ministers, (Shona Robison- Minister for Public Health and Adam Ingram – Minister for Children and Early years.) MSP's, local councilors and directors of social work/education. The guests were taken on a tour of the festival site, visited the consultation zone to see the messages from the young carers themselves and finally took part in a political speed dating session.

8.22 The political speed date session arose out of the suggestion of a young carer during the consultation in the lead up to the Festival. The political speed dating was hosted by 2 members of the Scottish Youth Parliament; young carers were given 4 minutes to ask the guests as many questions as they could on young carer issues before moving down the table to the next guest. This was a fun way for the young people to meet MSP's and other key decision makers and find out what they do and how they can represent young carer's views.

8.23 It also allowed the guests the opportunity to take away some ideas about the issues that young carers's are currently facing. For a lot of the young people this was the first and perhaps only opportunity they will have to have direct face to face contact with decision makers who decide and make the policies that have a direct impact on them. For the young carers who took part this was a very positive and empowering experience as you can see from the comments below.

- **'I got to take part in the political speed dating/meeting and put my views across.'**
- **'I'm really glad there were so many people up for talking to the MSP's. I LOVED it.'**
- **'The speed dating with the politicians.' (Was my favorite part off the festival?)**

8.24 There was also an opportunity for the young carers to make suggestions on what they would like a national forum to achieve. Some of the aims the young carers suggested a Young Carers National Forum should achieve are:

- More funding for young carers.
- Raise awareness of young carers and their issues.
- Have regular meetings with teachers.
- Have a young carer helpline
- Ensure every young carer in Scotland gets the support they need.
- To make sure all young carers in Scotland get a chance to get some respite away from home once a week.

The young carers thought for a national forum to achieve these aims the forum would need:

- Funding
- Time and support
- People willing to work on it.
- Participation, commitment and ideas.
- Research on young carers.

People and organisations that would need to support the forum would be:

- MSP's
- Local Councils
- Social Workers
- Teachers
- Young carers volunteers and workers

When asked how they thought a young carers forum should be set up the most popular suggestions were:

- An annual festival like this for consultation, discussion and action.

And

- Representatives from each project meet every 3 months at central location.

When asked how the Forum should celebrate their achievements the overwhelmingly suggestion was for an annual festival.

Outcome 4-Publicity and awareness of needs of young carers would lead to more young people identifying themselves as young carers.

8.25 The Festival generated significant media interest and publicity not only regarding the Festival but more importantly young carers and the issues they deal with on a daily basis. Due to this publicity, Louise Morgan, the Scottish Young Carers Development Manager had to leave the festival early to take part in the BBC Politics Show on Sunday the 14th of September. On the show she was able to discuss young carers and the issues that they are faced with on a national platform. The festival and Louise Morgan's interview was featured on the BBC National news.

8.26 The festival was officially opened by the TV actor Sanjeev Kohli which also resulted in the festival and young carers receiving national attention. Through this publicity it is hoped that more young people will identify themselves as a young carer and contact a local young carers project to receive support. This would be reflected in an increased number of young carers attending a second young carers festival.

**Media coverage of the Festival.**

31 July	<b>Children and Young People Now</b> News story about Young Carers Festival to be held in Scotland
3 August	<b>Sunday Post</b> Half page story and colour photograph about young carer with Reference to Young Carers Festival
4 August	<b>allmediascotland website</b> Young Carers festival news release reprinted in full
8 August	<b>Paisley Daily Express</b> News story about Young Carers Festival repeated news release
14 August	<b>The Scotsman</b> Government and Public Affairs section had paragraph on the Young Carers Festival with PRTC contact details
	<b>Southern Reporter</b>

- News story about Young Carers Festival, printing most of news release
- 31 August **Scottish Sunday Express**
- Double page spread on young carers's story and Young Carers Festival, plus praise for PRTC in leader column
- 1 Sept **allmediascotland website**
- New media release on Young Carers Festival on website
- 3 Sept **The Scotsman**
- Small news item on Young Carers Festival
- 7 Sept **Scottish Sunday Express**
- Nicola Barry's column focused on Young Carers Festival and the need for government support for young carers
- 9 Sept **The Herald**
- Full page feature on Young Carers Festival, with lead in from front page
- allmediascotland news website**
- Photocall for Young Carers Festival published on site
- 12 Sept **Times Educational Supplement Scotland**
- Two page feature on young carers and the Young Carers Festival
- The Courier and Advertiser**
- Major feature, with pictures, on young carers and the Young Carers Festival
- 13 Sept **BBC News online**
- Report about Young Carers Festival, with young carer from Renfrewshire talking about her experience
- 14 Sept **BBC TV Scotland Politics Show**
- Report on Young Carers Festival, with film of young carer from Dundee and PRTC's Louise Morgan live in discussion in studio
- BBC TV news**

Report on Young Carers Festival with footage of political speed dating and Louise Morgan

15 Sept

**The Herald**

Report on Young Carers Festival and Leader on need to do more for young carers

17 Sept

**Press and Journal**

Opinion column by Nicola Barry on Young Carers Festival in prime position on Leader page

22 Sept

**Greenock Telegraph**

Local MSP wrote about success of Young Carers Festival

## Evaluation Feedback

The young carers were asked the following questions with regards to the evaluation of the Festival.

Did you have the opportunity at the festival to have a voice and share your thoughts about being a Young Carer?

**87% said YES**                      **13% said NO**

Do you feel you had the opportunity to suggest ideas for activities at the Festival?

**83% said YES**                      **17% said NO**

The young carers were asked to rate the Festival overall, picking from:

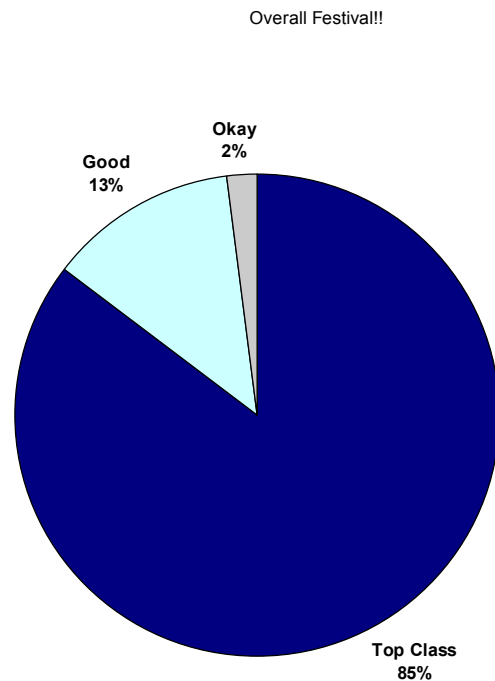
Top Class  
Good,  
Okay,  
Not Bothered  
Awful.

The results were as follows:

**Top Class=85%**

**Good= 13%**

**Okay= 2%**



**Would you like to have a Young Carers Festival next year?**

**100% said YES**

The young carers leaders were also asked to evaluate the festival.

Do you think the young people had the opportunity at the festival to have a voice and share their thoughts about being a Young Carer?

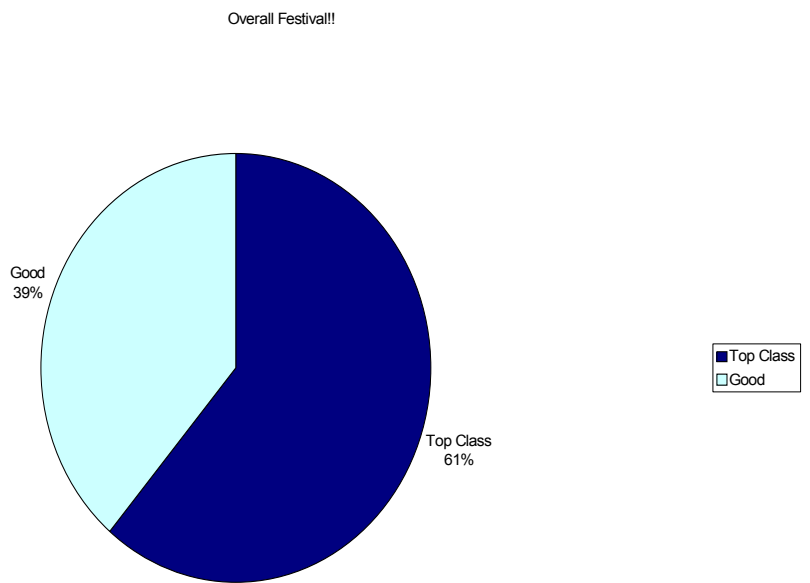
**98% said YES**                      **2% said NO**

Was there enough for the Young Carers to do?

**95% said YES**                      **5% said NO**

When the young carers leaders were asked to rate the festival, the results were as follows:

**Top Class = 61%**  
**Good = 39%**



**Would you bring your group to a Young Carer's festival next year?**

**100% said YES**

## **Recommendations**

Following the Festival and the consultation that took place the following recommendations have been made for consideration:

- That the Scottish Young Carers Festival becomes an annual event as a focus for consultation and celebration of young carers.
- Use the Festival as an opportunity to engage and involve young carers in the development of a national young carers strategy.
- The Festival Coordinator maintains an open dialogue with young carers groups, which is then followed up by an in-depth consultation. This consultation initially began at the festival, along with this the Festival Coordinator will continue the development of a national forum.
- Use the Festival as a tool to raise awareness of young carers on a national level, provide respite for the young carers – allowing them a weekend to be children and young people first.
- Use the Festival and development of national forum to provide training opportunities for the young carers, such as the media training that will provide skills that can be transferred to an employment setting.
- Use consultation feedback to raise awareness amongst

\* Teachers

\* Social Workers

\* GPs to

to raise awareness of young carers and they key role they have to play in supporting this group of young people.

**Acknowledgement and thanks.**

Thanks to the following organisations for their support, resources and help for the Scottish Young Carers Festival:

The Scottish Government

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance

Shared Care Scotland

Action for Children previously NCH Scotland

Barnardo's

Children 1<sup>st</sup>

Carers Scotland

The Coalition of Carers in Scotland

English Young Carers Festival Coordinators

Welsh Young Carers Festival Coordinator

All the festival volunteers

Caledonian Youth

Govan Law Centre

MS Society

Scottish Youth Parliament

Young Scot

St Andrews Ambulance

Lyreco for providing stationary packs to be used in Political Speed Dating Session.

Eagle Couriers for providing free transportation of all equipment and resources to Festival site and two 'Good Luck' cakes for young carers.

Scottish Football Association for providing two days of free football coaching and inflatable pitch at Festival.

Media Education for providing in kind £600 of training for Young Carer media group day prior to Festival.

RB Farquhar for providing toilet hire at discounted rate.

Burgerseed parties for providing Giant Connect 4, Giant Jenga, Giant Croquet and Bouncy Castle for free.