



Ore Valley Business Centre
93 Main Street
Lochgelly
KY5 9AF

Telephone: 01592 786717
Email: admin@fifeyoungcarers.co.uk
Website: www.fifeyoungcarers.co.uk

S Hutchinson
The Nineveh Charitable Trust
8 Mill Lane
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB10 2AS

01.07.22

Dear Ms Hutchinson

Fife Young Carers – providing a critical support network helping young carers to feel nurtured and valued

I am writing to thank you for your greatly appreciated donation of £1,000 to Fife Young Carers (FYC). With your help, we raised awareness in our local community during Carers Week of our services, support for young carers and the challenges they face.

FYC was established in 2003, drawing together smaller groups across the region who began working with young carers since 1998. We work with and for young carers in Fife, aged up to 25, supporting emotional, physical and educational needs. Every young carer should have support in place so they can enjoy, as far as possible, the same range of opportunities and experiences as their peers.

Young carers provide support for a family member who may have a long-term illness, mental health issue, physical disability, a learning disability and/or drug or alcohol issues. Tasks undertaken in the role as a young carer are varied and demanding, including domestic chores, personal care, caring for siblings, management of family finances, and prescriptions, emotional support for other family members and medical care. As a result, young carers struggle to find time for their own development, leading to significantly lower educational attainment (Children's Society, 2013). They are more likely to be 'NEET' (not in education, employment or training). In addition, a young carer's emotional and mental health can be neglected, and many young carers experience bullying, social exclusion, stigma, anxiety, low self-esteem and financial difficulties.

Many young carers we work with struggle to live on a low income. Scottish Government research has indicated that young carers in the most deprived areas provide more care than those in the least deprived areas (Young Carers: review of research and data, Scottish Government, 2017). We have seen increasing evidence of this issue, as young carers have admitted to us that they are struggling to afford food for their families. 9 families have been supported so far with approximately £500 given out.

We offer the following services to help young carers achieve their full potential:

- **Individual support:** If a young carer is experiencing difficulties coping with their caring role, a support worker can offer individual help to work through their problems. A support worker will also act as an advocate for young carers.
- **Support groups:** We run several support groups at locations across Fife, including junior groups (up to 12), an Intermediate group (13-16) and Young Adult Carers Group (16-25). These groups offer a break from caring and the opportunity to make friends and take part in a range of fun activities from arts and crafts, to baking, to sports.
- **Day trips and short breaks:** Day trips give young carers a break from their caring responsibilities and a chance to enjoy leisure activities as their non-carer peers would. Having a short break, making friends and developing their self-esteem allows young carers to return to their duties feeling refreshed and confident. Since these activities resumed in summer 2021, we have delivered a range of day trips, including alpaca trekking and bowling trips in Edinburgh. Throughout 2022 we have planned residential breaks to Dalguise, Young Carers Festival at Fordell Firs and glamping for a 7-Habits retreat.
- **Information and advice:** We provide young carers with information to help them in their caring role, for example the illness of the person they care for, how to get support at school, and practical life skills. Topics are based on young carers' requests and feedback, who have previously asked for topics such as coping skills, self-esteem, bullying and building confidence.
- **Workshops:** workshops are delivered online and at face-to-face sessions. Previous workshops have provided practical advice for carers of all ages, including cooking, Children's Rights, employability and Drug/Alcohol Awareness.
- **Raising awareness:** Alongside provision of direct support to young carers, we also aim to raise awareness of young carers' issues in schools, colleges and to the wider public. Our participation and engagement working group, The Voices of Change, helps to spread their message across the region, sharing their experiences and helping to engage other young carers.
- **Education Team:** this team works alongside school staff, supporting young carers in school who are having issues around schoolwork and attendance by helping professionals to identify and cater for the specific needs of the young carers.
- **Transitions Project:** Support for young carers at the transitional stage (16-25). This offer involves workshops on employability skills, study skills, self-confidence and developing positive habits that will carry them through to adulthood.

In 2021 Fife Young Carers...

- Received 239 new referrals. We currently work with approximately 691 young carers living across Fife.
- Provided 308 1:1 support sessions to young carers, 579 1:1 support sessions to young adult carers and 209 support group sessions for both young and young adult carers.
- Delivered 73 Young Carer Awareness sessions for schools reaching 2433 pupils.
- The Befriending Service supports young people and young adult carers to access respite opportunities and activities in their community. We have recruited and trained 11 Volunteer Befrienders so far. 34 young carers were supported over 32 sessions in 2021/2022.
- Recruited 2 Family Wellbeing Workers. The Family Wellbeing Service provides intensive, holistic support to young carers and their family where the young carer has an intensive caring role and a challenging family situation. We are currently supporting 22 families to improve outcomes for the families and lessen the impact caring has on the young carers.

92% of young carers 25 and under stated that participating in these activities made them better able to cope with their roles. They felt better supported at school, with key improvements being improved understanding from their teachers and flexible start times and timetables. 88% state they feel more confident and 77% have learnt new skills to help them to cope with their caring roles. 76% stated they felt more positive about their future choices and were more aware of the support available in the community.

Carers Week: Making Caring Visible and Valued

Carers Week is a national, annual event raising awareness of carers and caring organisations. We planned a series of awareness raising events throughout the week involving the young carers themselves. Our Voices of Change, participation and engagement working group for young carers, managed networking meetings. These highlighted the importance of making caring visible and valued to health, social work, local authority, education and voluntary sector professionals.

Also, we were able to spread awareness across Fife, by being part of a community radio programme on Kingdom FM which has over 41,000 listeners. Being able to reach all of them helps to improve the wider community's awareness of the challenges young carers face. Our videos were shared on Kingdom FM's website and social media channels. Young carers had the opportunity to share their experiences through our social media platforms and Q&A sessions. Through this we were able to reach young carers who may not have heard of us otherwise.

The campaign reached 200 young carers, some of whom have previously used some of our services. We also recruited volunteers and formed new relationships with professionals in local authority, social work, education, health and other third sector organisations. Throughout the week we gave away branded merchandise (pens, keyrings, wristbands, magnets, post-it notes, etc.) promoting our services in the local community.

Why we are successful

The last two years have been incredibly challenging for the young carers we work with, who have struggled to manage caring responsibilities and maintaining their education alongside the mental toll of the fear experienced by many for vulnerable loved ones during the pandemic, but we have been flexible in providing as much support as possible during this time.

Providing support for young carers helps them to feel recognised, supported and valued. We are the only organisation which delivers services solely and directly to young carers in Fife. We are a trusted partner working alongside several agencies and organisations and are well established, well connected and well known. We have an excellent track record of delivering the support that young carers tell us they really need. One of our key strengths is that we are neutral and confidential. Many young carers worry about not being able to cope and the pressure this will place on their family, or they worry about speaking out and attracting unwanted attention. Our support workers provide a sense of safety and build up a trusting relationship with young carers so they can talk freely about their problems. This degree of trust means that we have an unrivalled scope in reaching young carers in most need and is demonstrated by the consistently growing numbers of young carers who come to us for support.

Our funding comes from five main sources: local government, The Big Lottery, trusts, foundations and special funds (for example, BBC Children in Need, Awards for All, The Robertson Trust and The Gannochy Trust), individuals and companies.

Thank you once again for your support.

Yours sincerely



Kirstie Howell
Service Manager

Fife Young Carers



What is a young carer?

A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 years (young adult carers are aged 18-25) who has been affected by a significant caring role for a family member who may have one of the following:

- Long-term illness
- Mental ill health
- HIV/AIDS
- Physical disability
- Learning disability
- Drug or alcohol dependency

Being a young carer can be very lonely. Often, caring duties leave no time for friendships. Young Carers may want to keep these things to themselves for a number of reasons, perhaps being worried about bullying.



Who are we?

Fife Young Carers was founded in 2003, when several local young carers projects merged to form one new charity. Fife Young Carers support young carers up to the age of 25 years in Fife, many of whom come from areas of multiple deprivation. We offer a range of services to help young carers develop their skills and confidence, achieve balance in their lives, and just enjoy acting like any other child their age.

What services do we offer?

- Individual support: in 2021/22 we offered 887 one-to-one sessions to young carers. Support workers also act as advocates for young carers.
- Support groups: we run several support groups for young carers across Fife, including junior groups (up to 12 years) and intermediate groups (aged 12-18). These groups give young carers a break from their caring role and offer the opportunity to make new friends and take part in a range of fun activities from arts and crafts, to cooking and baking, to walks and sport. In 2021/22 we delivered 209 group support sessions.
- Fun day trips and short holidays: these respite breaks give our young carers the chance to try new activities, make friends and develop their self-esteem in unfamiliar environments.
- Information and advice: we offer advice on a range of subjects, such as balancing care with school work, developing self-esteem, finance, employment and education options, and practical life skills. Information is disseminated through workshops—for example, our recent 'What's for Dinner?' and '7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens' workshops—and on a more informal basis.
- Raising awareness: along with the provision of direct support to young carers, we also aim to raise awareness of young carers issues throughout schools, colleges and the wider public. Through liaison with local schools, we were able to identify more young carers. Some of these young carers were referred to our services, with the remainder supported by school and the young carers' authorisation card scheme.
- Transitions project: support for young carers at the transitional stage (aged 16-25). This often involves workshops on employability skills, study skills, self-confidence and developing positive habits that will carry them through to adulthood.