



SUPPORT FOR YOUNG ADULT CARERS

What is the service?

Young Adult Carers Service.

Who runs it?

Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service (PKAVS) Carers Services Department.

Who does it benefit?

Young adult carers aged 16-25 in Perth and Kinross. Young adult carers support/care for a friend or family member of any age due to disability, mental illness, chronic/terminal illness and/or problems relating to substance misuse.

What does it do?

The Young Adult Carers Service provides support and signposting services to young adult carers as they make decisions about their future and begin to access adult services. The service supports young adult carers to reduce their level of caring, transition from children's services to adult services and make decisions about education, employment and their future life. This is achieved through one to one support, advocacy, group work, respite breaks, information, guidance and support to access other general youth services.

Why was it started?

PKAVS Young Carers Service (a part of PKAVS Carers Services) was conscious that young carers aged 16 to 18 were leaving the young carers service and not accessing any other support services. PKAVS Young Carers Service conducted research alongside Angus Carers Centre and Abertay University (Annetts, 2012) to find out why this was, and found that services available to adult carers were not seen as appropriate by those aged 16 to 18. Services for adult carers are directed towards supporting their caring role and strengthening their caring skill sets. While both these are significant for young adult carers, they also need a service that will empower them to take control over their lives and make the most of the opportunities available to them.

As a result of these findings, PKAVS Carers Services put together a plan to develop a Young Adult Carers Service, with the aim of providing a service designed to support young people making their transition to full adulthood.

In 2008, Saul Becker and Fiona Becker of Nottingham University published research, commissioned by Carers Trust, on young adult carers in the UK aged 16-24. This research echoed the findings of Annetts' research, recognising that young adult carers have specific support needs as they transition from children's services to adult services.

What are the aims and objectives?

PKAVS Young Adult Carers Service aims to:

- Support and advocate for young adult carers as they transition to adult services
- Encourage young adult carers to think about their future life choices
- Provide support to access education, employment or training
- Offer information and support to access health and wellbeing services
- Facilitate and create opportunities to access volunteering or local involvement initiatives for young people
- Offer respite breaks for young adult carers to get time out from their caring responsibilities
- Provide young adult carers with someone to talk to
- Provide a voice for young adult carers and encourage young adult carers to develop their own campaigning voice

How is it funded?

In April 2014 the service was successful in securing £39,629 over two years from Carers Trust, About Time Programme. This provided funding for a Young Adult Carers Development Officer to set up and lead the service.

Part of the Development Officer's role has been to access additional funding to further develop the service. Since April 2014, the service secured an additional £1950 from Carers Trust, Time to Find Me! Programme to provide a National 5 qualification (Pathways to Extreme Success) to 10 young people, delivered by YMCA Perth; £1038 from Community Food and Health (Scotland) to provide cooking sessions named Community COOK IT; and £2205 from Cashback for Communities Round Youth Work Fund to provide carers with a three night residential break. The service is currently in the process of securing larger pots of funding for April 2016 onwards.

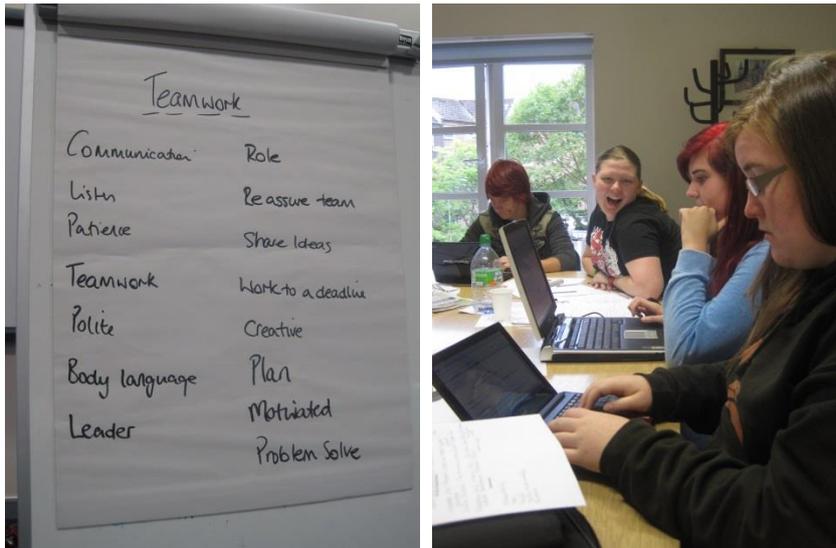
What has is achieved?

"The Young Adult Carers Service gives me breathing space and the staff are very trustworthy and non-judgemental" (young adult carer aged 18).

Young adult carers have received information, advice and guidance on available financial and personal supports, and been assisted to access education, training, volunteering and employment. This support has helped to reduce some of the uncertainty and/or stress and anxiety directly or indirectly linked with their caring role. The service's carers' assessment reviews have echoed this reduction.

Since April 2014, 29 young adult carers have been assessed and given information and/or support. In addition, cared for family members have seen the support provided to them increase via appropriate signposting.

A partnership approach was quickly sought and established, resulting in a great deal of positive work within the service's first year. The Business Support Group provided a six week Enhancing Employability Programme for six young adult carers. Each carer was offered a 20 hour work placement which was personalised to their needs and interests. The service is positive about continuing with this link.



The Housing Advice Centre (P&K Council) provided four group sessions covering homelessness, assertiveness, conflict resolution and personality; all of which related well to the group's caring situations. In addition, carers have been referred onto the centre for further information, advice and support with any housing/home difficulties they have been facing.

The Young Adult Carers Service has linked their referral form/process with PKC Drug, Alcohol, Homeless & BBV Team. Any young adult carer supporting someone with a substance misuse issue can automatically be signposted onto the PKC Team and vice versa.

The Young Adult Carers Service is based within Perth College UHI on a weekly basis, providing support to student carers and attempting to identify hidden carers within the education system. Discussions are ongoing with Student Services, The Student Association and the Counselling Department around enhancing support for student carers. Young adult carer awareness work is also being provided within local High Schools to pupils and staff.

Seven young adult carers are on route to achieving the PX2, Developing Effective Thinking Skills qualification through Perth YMCA. PX2 equips individuals with effective thinking skills that act as a springboard to a successful future, and is credited and levelled by SCQF at Level 5 in Scotland. For some group members, this will be their first ever qualification.

The service provides fortnightly respite groups based at The Gateway Centre, Perth City. Here the young people have their own space to meet up with others in similar situations. In addition, the service delivered its first residential stay in July 2014; taking 10 young adult carers to Carnoustie for a 2 night break. The service hopes to continue with a yearly residential break involving activities, skill based projects and time to relax.



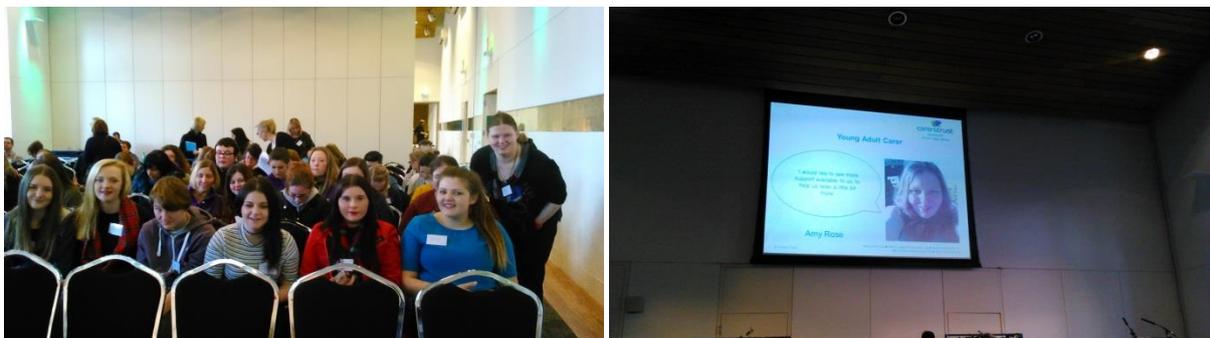
"I enjoyed the residential because I got to meet new people and take a break from my caring role. I now know that I am not alone".

"The residential was so beneficial to my mental health because all the staff were so understanding and went out of their way to make sure that everyone enjoyed all the activities as much as possible. Just being out of the house and in a positive atmosphere with people who understand your issues was such a relief and it was definitely a trip I'll remember".

"I really enjoyed the residential. I felt I was able to de-stress and meet a couple of new people. It would be great to go back as everyone gets to relax and just be themselves for a while".

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

Two focus groups held in April and May 2014 consulted young adult carers on how they would like the new service to develop. Since this date, young adult carer consultation and feedback has been ongoing. Carers Trust Time to Be Heard! Young adult carers official Scottish launch was held in February 2015. The event provided youth participation opportunities and a chance for young adult carers to share their experiences and engage with MSPs and decision makers. 11 young people attended this event with one young adult carer having an allocated role on the day.



Would you like more information?

If you would like more information about the service or wish to make a referral, please contact Sarah Kidd (Young Adult Carers Development Officer) on 01738 567076 / sarah.kidd@pkavs.org.uk

Thank you to all services who have worked with the YAC Service within the last year. Support from yourselves has been invaluable to the development of the service.