

CARERS IN HERTFORDSHIRE

YOUNG CARERS PROJECT

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009

REPORT

"THE U.K.'S SECRET SERVICE"



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The UK's Secret Service
Young Carers Conference
27th October 2009

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27th October 2009

“The UK’s Secret Service”

Programme

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- 9.30 a.m. Arrival/Coffee**
- 10.00 a.m Welcome Housekeeping**
- 10.05 a.m Introduction - YCC**
- 10.10 a.m Ice Breaker – Who are you?**
- 10.25 a.m Carers Strategy
Achievements of Young Carers Project**
- 10.35 a.m Young Carers Wish List**
- 10.40 a.m Chair of Young Carers Council
Presents CSF Report**
- 10.45 a.m Introduction to Dance Workshop (DVD)**
- 10.55 a.m Dance Production**
- 11.05 a.m Comfort Break**
- 11.20 a.m Introduction to Junior YCC
DVD Clip**
- 11.25 a.m What has or can your organisation do to help young
carers?**
- 11.35 a.m Question & Answer Session
Young Carers Ask Professionals Questions**
- 11.50 a.m Summing Up – Helen Orchard**
- 12.00 a.m Finale – Dance Production**
- 12.15 p.m Lunch**

Young Carers Conference – October 2009

Introduction:

This year the Young Carers Conference took place on the 27th October at Trestle Arts Base, St. Albans.

We used the same National Carers Week theme of ‘The UK’s Secret Service’ for the Young Carers Conference.

We believe young carers are the UK’s secret service – a vulnerable group of young people who do not readily identify with the term ‘carer’. For many of these young people caring is seen as ‘just being a family’ and they may not realise there is help and support available.

The highlight of Conference was a dance routine, choreographed by Gemma Dolan a Teacher at Kings Langley School. Students from the school and members of the young carers project performed an exciting routine to the theme tune from a James Bond movie, interspersed with other dramatic sound tracks.

On a more serious note, the Young Carers Council gave a presentation on:

- *The achievements of the Project*
- *Up to date information on the service provided by Children, Schools and Families.*

The event was a great success and an ideal opportunity for young carers to express how they feel about caring and the type of help and support they and their families would like to receive.

So a big thank you to Members of the Senior and Junior Young Carers Council, other young carers who attended to give their support, the Dancers and Gemma Dolan for her hard work and commitment to the dance project.

The Aims of the Young Carers Conference

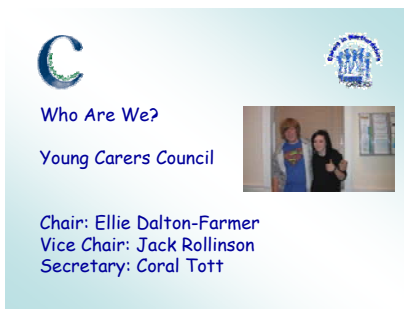
The Conference aims to highlight the issues young carers face educationally, socially and emotionally. They have the opportunity to speak directly to professionals who work with families and explain for themselves what services would benefit them and the people they care for.

The aims are met through a variety of methods during the Conference.

The Conference always starts with an ice-breaker. This is a tradition. This year was more of a challenge as delegates were seated in a theatre. Undaunted The Young Carers Council devised 'people bingo'.

Delegate packs were numbered, and Council Members called out numbers at random. The person with that numbered pack was then requested to stand and tell the young carers who they were, who they worked for and how they did or could help young carers.

Following on from this, Ellie, Chair of the Young Carers Council, and Jack, Vice Chair, gave their presentation, starting with a recap of the Carers Strategy, followed by a Review of the Project's achievements.



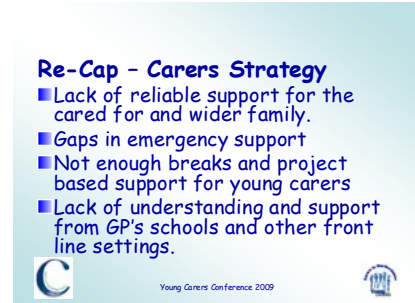
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Who Are We?

Young Carers Council



Chair: Ellie Dalton-Farmer
Vice Chair: Jack Rollinson
Secretary: Coral Tott



Re-Cap - Carers Strategy

- Lack of reliable support for the cared for and wider family.
- Gaps in emergency support
- Not enough breaks and project based support for young carers
- Lack of understanding and support from GP's schools and other front line settings.

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Young Carers Conference 2009



Young Carers Project

- Staffed by:
 - Cindy Honour - Project Manager
 - Marie Freeman - School Development Worker
 - Cheryll Jones - Project Co-ordinator
- Currently there are 10 members on the Senior Young Carers Council

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Young Carers Conference 2009

Project Achievements

Last year we reported that there were 506 young carers registered with the Project, so far this year the number has increased to 585.

Not all of these young carers take part in trips and activities, but they all receive information and have the opportunity to participate. They also receive a quarterly news letter and other relevant information.

Project Achievements

In the last 6 months the Project has:

- Received 96 referrals
- Carried out 52 home visits
- Held a consultation event on our service.
- Provided 266 places on 18 tips/activities
- There are currently 585 young carers registered with the Project.

 Young Carers Conference 2009 



- Activity days
- Karting
- A theatre trip to see *Grease*
- A trip to CBBC



 Young Carers Conference 2009 

Support Groups

This year Members of the Young Carers Council together with Bernie Talbot from Youth Connexions put together a funding bid to cover transport costs for three young carer support groups run by Connexions. We are delighted to say the funding bid was successful so young carers attending these groups will continue to have transport provided.

Carrying on the theme of the UK's Secret Service, the North Herts Support Group, run by the Project and supported by a dedicated team of volunteers held a 'BOND' night, to celebrate National Carers Week. Members dressed as James Bond and his bevy of Female admirers!




Other support groups in the County have been set up by working in partnership with CSF Personal Assistants and Extended Schools Co-ordinators and further groups may soon be starting. A full list of these groups is available from the Young Carers Project.


School Work

School Work
What young carers say about support in School

- Really happy to be talking to someone about it.
- It is fun and you can help others
- I really like how they can support me through it.




Young Carers Conference 2009




Future work will include:

- Working in partnership to identify and set-up support systems for young carers in Primary and Junior schools
- Developing a model of best practice that can be shared with Primary and Junior Schools across the County



Young Carers Conference 2009



16 schools in the County offer support in school time through:

- Drop-in sessions
- One-to-one work
- Young Carers Support Groups
- The Project has completed 7 transfer and support plans. Ensuring young carers receive support once they move to Secondary School.

Information:

We are pleased to say the web site www.koolcrers.org.uk is a great success and the Project is receiving more referrals downloaded from the website. The website is updated annually in consultation with members of the Junior and Senior Young Carers Council.

Quarterly News letters are sent to all young carers and professionals on our mailing list and the Young Carers Heart to Herts DVD launched last year has been used in Assemblies and presentations.

The Junior Young Carers have also taken part in filming a DVD which will be used as a raising awareness tool in Primary Schools.

Junior Young Carers Council - Update

The Junior Young Carers Council was launched last year. During the year they were involved in a consultation about the type of service they would like, and what they wanted to achieve as a Council. We are looking to recruit at least four additional members to the Council.



Members of the Junior Council

Plans for the Future:

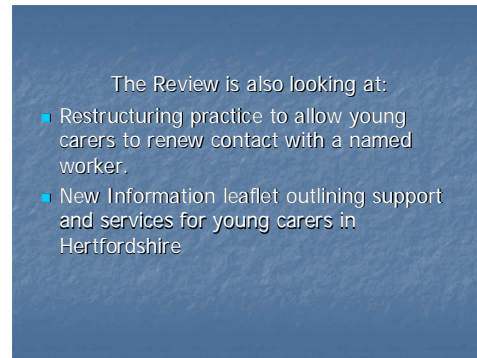
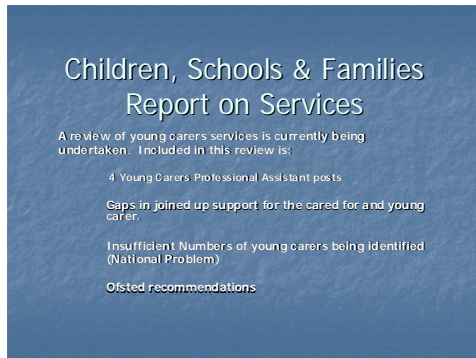


The Project will continue to raise awareness of young carer's issues in schools and across agencies and will continue to provide a wide programme of trips and activities for young carers age 9 – 18 years.

We know there are still gaps in the service, and the Project is working in partnership with CSF, Extended Schools and Youth Connexions to close the gaps that still exist in local support.

We are also looking at the service provided for the older age group 16-24 years to see what type of support would benefit these young people the most.

CSF Progress Report:



The four Young Carer's professional assistant's posts based within Children, Schools and Families assessment teams are currently being reviewed to ensure young carers are more easily identified and supported within Hertfordshire.

The review of services for young carers includes addressing gaps in the joining-up of support around the person cared for and the young carer and improving the quality and reliability of support .

The review of young carers services in Hertfordshire has highlighted that more must be done to identify young carers. Research indicates that this is a challenge throughout the U.K.

The view emerging from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) is:

- “Young Carers should receive more than an assessment and be given long term support and assistance with a clear named person or team”.
- Practice therefore will be restructured in Children, Schools and Families allowing young carers to renew contact with a named worker, already familiar with their circumstances without the need of another assessment.
- The Children' Schools and Families service intend to produce a new information leaflet outlining support and services for young carers in Hertfordshire. CSF would like to invite young carers to be involved in the development of this leaflet to ensure it is young person friendly and accessible.

School Work

- Working in Partnership with Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project, extended Schools and CSF PA's to:
- Close gaps in support for under 10 years.
- Develop support groups for young carers under 10 years

In recognition of gaps in service for young carers under the age of 10 years and the changes in CSF, Young Carers Professional Assistants, Carers in Hertfordshire and extended schools co-ordinators are working in partnership to raise awareness and develop support groups for young carers under 10 years.

BME Young Carers Officer

- Working in partnership with Carers in Hertfordshire
- BME Young Carers were identified in Watford Schools including:
- Francis Coombe
- Watford Boys Grammar
- Watford Girls Grammar

A specific Black and Minority Ethnic Young Carers Officer has been in post this year and has been successful in identifying young carers in a number of schools within the Watford area including Francis Coombe School, Watford Boys Grammar and Watford Girls Grammar. Within the review of young carers services it has been recommended that this post is deleted and re-placed by the post of Young Carers Development Officer. It will be essential for this post holder to have the skills and knowledge of BME communities to respond appropriately to their specific needs but the post will be more inclusive than at present.

Finally

- Children Schools and Families, will continue to work in partnership with Carers in Hertfordshire, The PCT's and other agencies, to improve the service provision for young carers in Hertfordshire
- A full copy of this Report is available from Becky Gwynn – (Project Officer Young Carers & Disabled children's Team – CSF Policy & Practice)

All of the work in Hertfordshire supporting young carers will continue to be provided and developed in partnership with Hertfordshire Children's Schools and Families, Carers in Hertfordshire, Primary Care Trusts's and other agencies.

Dance Performance

Shaken not Stirred!

Dancing to a Bond movie theme, students from Kings Langley School and members of the Young Carers Project performed their version of the UK's Secret Service. The dancers performed a complicated and entertaining dance routine to perfection after only a few rehearsals.



Dancers in rehearsal

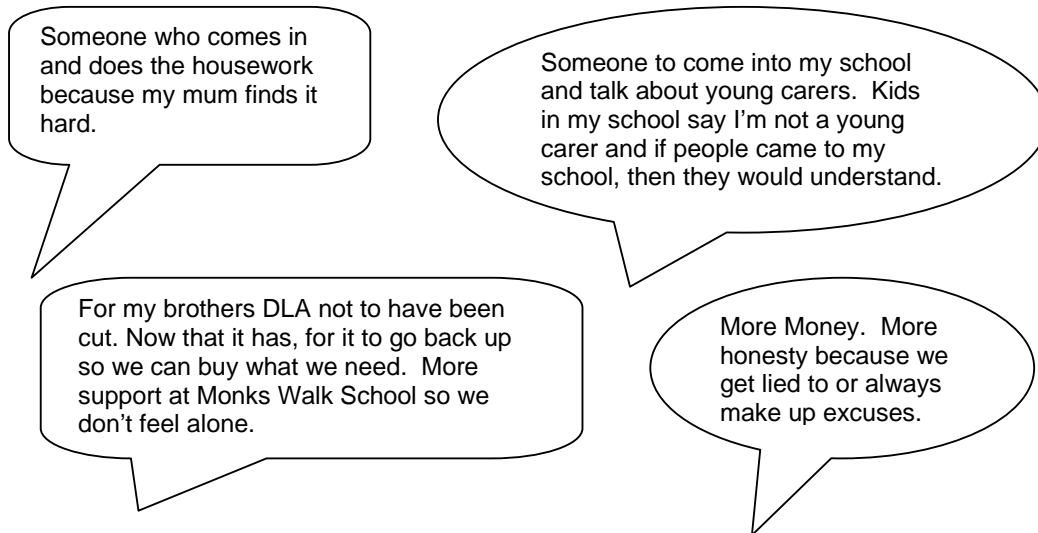


The Full dance troupe

Over the past eight years, Young Cares have highlighted their issues through various mediums including: Drama Art, Music, Photography and now Dance. We wait with baited breath to see what ideas they have for Conference 2010!

Wish List:

Prior to the Conference, some young carers were asked what they would wish for in the way of support. These are some of their wishes.



Questions and Answers:

After another game of people Bingo where young carers asked more professionals attending what they could do to help young carers, the Young Carers Council responded to questions put to them by the professionals:

Q. from CMHT - What would be most helpful to young carers from professionals?

A. Attitude – don't say "I know what you are going through". You don't. This is talking down to us and we are not children – we act like adults. Too many social workers on one case only. Not there for a while and then passed on to someone else and NOTHING gets done!!!

Q. Can you give an example of a day in your life?

A. One young carer responded. "Well I get up in the morning and my mum comes in just as my alarm goes off and starts having a go at me. My mum has multiple sclerosis, suffers from depression and is an alcoholic. I get up have a shower, I remind my mum to take her tablets and then get ready and go to school.

Sometimes when I'm at school I get phone calls shouting at me just for things that I have done, but she has forgotten. When I get home there is usually an argument, either about school, school work or something else. Sometimes I just want there to be someone else for her to have a go at apart from me".

Q. Do you get help for your Mum?

A. The Young Carer replied "Mum has been offered help but she refuses to engage"

Q. From Extended Schools - If we were to organise an event or trip, what would you like, would you prefer to attend on your own or with Parent?

A. On our own, we like to get out of the home environment and meet other young carers.

Q. Do you have any access to counselling and does funding cover that?

A. (By Cindy Honour) the funding we receive does not cover counselling. As an organisation we would with permission from the parent/guardian either refer or signpost the young person to a counselling service.

Q. How can schools help you, and is your school aware you are a young carer?

A.

- Being more understanding with regards to homework being in on time.
- Not being treated like someone different.
- Help with bullying, as this is a problem for young carers.
- Some people don't mind school knowing that they are young carers. But there are some who don't want anyone in school to know. Bullying is given as an issue.

Q. Do you want your school to identify you as a young carer?

A. Up to individuals. We want recognition but we don't really want to be singled out. We are not that different, this again can lead to bullying.

Q. What is the best way of making people aware of the project?

A. School assemblies are a good way.

Q. What's the best thing about being a young carer?

- The trips and activities and they are all free
- We know that we have someone there who will listen and understand.

Q. Can anyone give an example of a good experience with a social worker?

SILENCE.

Evaluation:

It is important to Carers in Hertfordshire and young carers, to know if our Annual Conference achieves it's aim of raising awareness and influencing services for young carers and their families.

We ask staff, parents and young carers attending for their feedback and comments.

This is what staff had to say:

- *Very enlightening, emotional and energetic – Thank you to everyone involved!*
- *I knew the young carers support group existed, but not the impact it had on young carers. I liked the way Conference was presented by young carers.*
- *Conference has increased my awareness by listening to the views and wishes of the young people.*
- *It has been helpful to hear what young carer's want from professionals, in particular how they want schools to be aware, but not to highlight them to others.*
- *The Question and answer session was very interesting to listen to*
- *Impressed by the commitment of the professionals present.*
- *It was good to hear the talk and the honesty about how young carers want to be treated by professionals.*

- *Young carers have many issues and the conference just highlights the need for more input.*
- *Everything was well covered; I have a much greater awareness but am interested in learning so much more.*

Without exception all staff attending thought that hearing first hand from young carers was very enlightening and very powerful. They also thought the dance routine was exceptionally good.

What young Carers had to say:

To the question, “What did you like best about Conference”?

- It was awesome, and it was fun!
- When we could tell people about what we have to do.
- Watching the video
- The theme
- The Question and Answer Session
- They all agreed the dance routine was great!

To the Question “What if anything would you change about the Conference”?

- Most said “Less Talking”
- Others said: Nothing it was really good
- Don’t Know
- More talking to people
- I would change nothing

What parents had to say:

At the very first Young Carers Conference held, we invited parents to attend. However, when we reviewed the conference with young carers, they expressed the view that they would rather not have their parents attending as they felt unable to express themselves so clearly because they did not want to upset their parents or make them feel guilty.

For following conferences we agreed not to invite parents. However, because some of the young carers were involved in the Dance routine we felt it only fair that their parents had the opportunity to see the performance. A few attended, and these are their comments about the day:

- I now know a bit more about how as a whole, how grown up and forward the young carers are. I loved how open they are.
- Has made me aware how much hard work is involved. The Dance was the best thing for me; they put a lot of hard work into it.
- Now know there is a budget and why young carers can only go on a limited number of trips. It was good to see young carers joining together with a school.
- The Question and Answers session by the children, and the dance routine.

Conclusion:

The Project team are committed to holding the Young Carers Conference every year – it is one of the most powerful ways of informing staff working with families, about young carers issues.

We will aim to ensure the attendance of staff that have not yet seen and heard the views of young carers first hand, to improve the experience young carers have of services.

We would like to see far more professionals attending, spreading the word and improving services for young carers and their families.

Young Carers issues do not change, they still tell us:

- We need more recognition and support in School
- We need social workers to listen to us
- We want more respite and activities

Gaps still exist in services for young Carers. Together with CSF we will continue to look at these gaps and work towards improving services for young carers and their families.

CSF are looking at the gaps for the under 10's service and Carers in Hertfordshire will be looking closely at the gaps for the 16-24 age group.

With the Every Child Matters Outcomes and the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework, we feel confident that more young carers will be identified and supported.

To achieve this aim we do need all agencies to work together in identifying and referring young carers to appropriate support.

Cindy Honour
October 2009



**“It was good to hear the talk
and the honesty about how
young carers want to be
treated by professionals”**

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