

Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service¹



Education Attainment Service

Coronavirus
(COVID-19)

Background

The Education Attainment Service sits within PKAVS young carers. Development started in May 2019 and it welcomed its first referrals in September 2019.

The caring role for many of the young people in our service has significant impact on confidence and home life can often be chaotic. For many young carers, schools can be a form of respite. However, schools are often unaware of a disruptive home environment and therefore are not always in a position to offer the support required.

The project offers support to young carers who are struggling in education, who are in danger of disengaging or have disengaged entirely. Our service aims to first acknowledge the impact of a caring role on education and to understand the interests and aspirations of the young person. Tuition is then guided by this and is delivered in a blended way using a person centred approach and the Scottish curriculum.

The project receives referrals through young carers themselves (if aged over 12), families; schools; social work and any other agencies working with young people.

Since Lock down

Referrals into the project have increased significantly and our tutors have gone from 17 weekly 1-1 tuition sessions to over 50 online sessions per week. In order to support our younger carers we have begun small group sessions via an online education platform called Vedamo. These are groups no larger than 3 for those aged 5-10 years old.

We have made the decision to keep tuition open over the summer holidays for those young carers wishing to engage. This will allow some continuity in such a time of uncertainty and allow for a growth in educational confidence which may alleviate some of the anxiety for those young people who are nervous about the return.

Case Study

[English Tuition - Rachel's Story \(on next page\)](#)

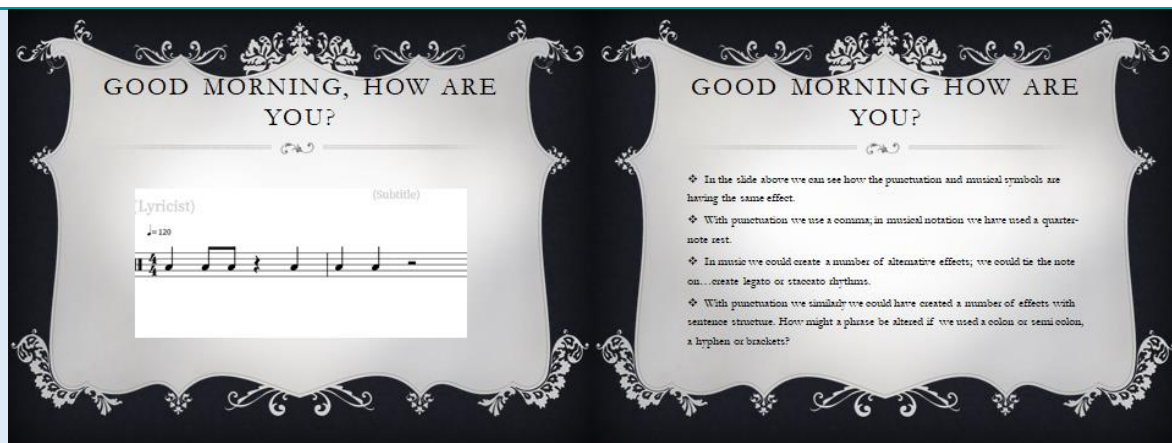
¹ PKAVS

Rachel was referred by the usual channels. As per usual working pattern Rachel was contacted by phone and an initial appointment was arranged. Rachel was informed that this would be a 'get-to-know-me session'; this would be an opportunity to allow the tuition to be designed to suit her aims and interests.

Rachel used Skype for her initial meeting. Rachel revealed that she had not enjoyed her English lessons at school and that she had struggled to engage with them. This was not due to a lack of effort on her part rather a difficulty staying focused when she felt she was spending long periods of time being read to. Rachel did not feel that this approach was particularly stimulating and would 'switch off'.

Rachel spoke enthusiastically about music and musical theatre in particular. Rachel also revealed that she is learning to play the keyboard and using it to write songs. I suggested that this could be a useful tool in unlocking English as there are a number of shared aspects such as rhythm, tone, dynamics and meaning.

Rachel and I have been exploring these ideas for three sessions and have been focused initially on the use of punctuation and rhythm. Below are two slides from the first presentation on this theme which used an everyday phrase to illustrate how punctuation and musical notation achieve similar objectives.



The image shows two presentation slides side-by-side, both with a decorative, ornate border. The left slide is titled "GOOD MORNING, HOW ARE YOU?" and features a musical staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a tempo marking of ♩ = 120. The lyrics "GOOD MORNING, HOW ARE YOU?" are written above the staff. The right slide is also titled "GOOD MORNING, HOW ARE YOU?" and contains a list of four bullet points explaining the relationship between punctuation and musical notation.

- ❖ In the slide above we can see how the punctuation and musical symbols are having the same effect.
- ❖ With punctuation we use a comma; in musical notation we have used a quarter-note rest.
- ❖ In music we could create a number of alternative effects; we could tie the note on...create legato or staccato rhythms.
- ❖ With punctuation we similarly we could have created a number of effects with sentence structure. How might a phrase be altered if we used a colon or semi colon, a hyphen or brackets?

In the second session we looked in more detail at how punctuation and musical notation drive the shape of leading melody in song writing. In this session we looked at poetic meter, prose and punctuation and hip-hop cadence; this used a number of diverse examples from James Joyce, William Shakespeare, Andrew Motion and Roots Manuva. The third session applied each of these aspects to the Act 1 Scene 7 of Rachel's favourite musical *Wicked*, and the song Popular.

Tutored sessions are planned for the themes of dynamics and tone and these sessions will cover a number of weeks. Rachel has been invited to feedback on each session and has been very positive about the experience. Moreover, Rachel demonstrably engaged and vocal on these subjects. Rachel has interesting and valid views on written works of English and is forthcoming when wishing to share them.