

Working Together to Support
Young Carers
in Perth & Kinross
A Learning Pack for Professionals

“Listen to us and see us”

Perth and Kinross Young Carer 2020



Contents

Section 1: Our duties

Page 1/2	Identifying young carers
Page 3	Young Carers statement
Page 4/5	Levels of support
Page 6	Case study

Section 3: Educational Support

Page 10	Young carers champions
Page 11	Young carers ID card
Page 12	Education Attainment Service
Page 13	Case study

Section 2: Practical Supports for Professionals

Page 7	Practical Advice
Page 8	Young carers e-learning module
Page 9	Awareness raising

Section 4: Listen to us

Page 14	Young carer voice
Page 15	Mind of My Own
Page 16	Young Scot
Page 17	Relationship Scotland

INTRODUCTION

This document was written in a collaborative approach between Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) and Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service (PKAVS). There is a wealth of information available regarding support for young carers, including various strategies and policies. This document attempts to bring a synopsis of all that information together in one place to aid professionals working with young carers. We would urge those seeking more in-depth knowledge in any of the areas we cover to follow the links to the full strategies and documents.

The Scottish Government recognises that there are approximately 44,000 young carers in Scotland with around 29,000 of them being under 16. Further extensive survey work by young carers services and [Carers Trust Scotland](#) suggests that 1 in 10 children in an average school classroom has a caring role. However, the official figures of the number of young carers recorded across schools in Scotland are significantly lower.

At the time of publication there are 17,860 school age children in Perth and Kinross. According to the Carers Trust we can estimate that there will be approximately 1,786 young carers. Only 20% have been identified and are receiving support from PKAVS and PKC. It's everyone's job to make sure our young people receive the support required to meet their full potential. The working relationship between third sector and statutory bodies continues to strengthen which is resulting in a more robust & holistic approach for our young people. This is something that requires continued drive and a recognition of shared values.

'We recognise that meeting the needs of young carers cannot rest with one organisation alone and that it takes strong partnerships and effective joint working across a wide range of services, including the Third Sector, to support the varied needs of young carers and their families' (Perth and Kinross Carers Strategy [2019-2022](#)).

1 SECTION 1: OUR DUTIES

Identifying Young Carers

A young carer is a young person between the ages of 5 and 18 who help look after a family member who is mentally/physically ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol.

Within PKAVS our Young Carers team supports young carers 5-16 years old. For carers who are aged between 16-25, there is a Young Adult Carer Service (YAC) that provides support.

This ensures there is no gap between the young carers and adult services. This provides a solid transition between the age groups.

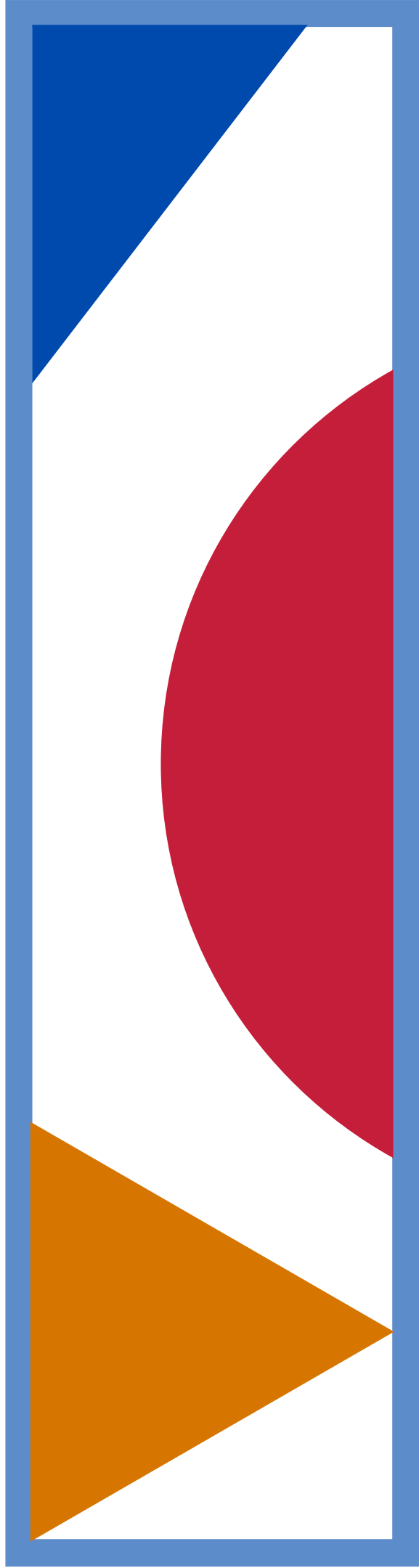
A young person's caring role differs in every household and can include a variety of care including physical and emotional support. Young carers do an incredible job supporting those they care for.

If there are any concerns that a child is at risk of harm, you should follow your organisation's child protection procedure and report this to Social Work in the first instance.

However, when young people are required to take on too many caring responsibilities, or carry out caring roles that are not appropriate, there can be limiting or adverse effects on their health and overall wellbeing. This can impact every area of their lives including school, health, community and home.

However, is not always evident that a young person has a caring role at home. Indeed, the fear of stigma or involvement of children services may result in some young carers keeping this intentionally hidden. For others, they may have been so immersed in their caring role from an early age that they do not identify as being a young carer.

Behaviours that are seen as negative or challenging are often significant indicators of underlying issues in a young person's life. Whilst there are some common signs that someone could be a young carer it is important to highlight that these signs could also point to other situations.

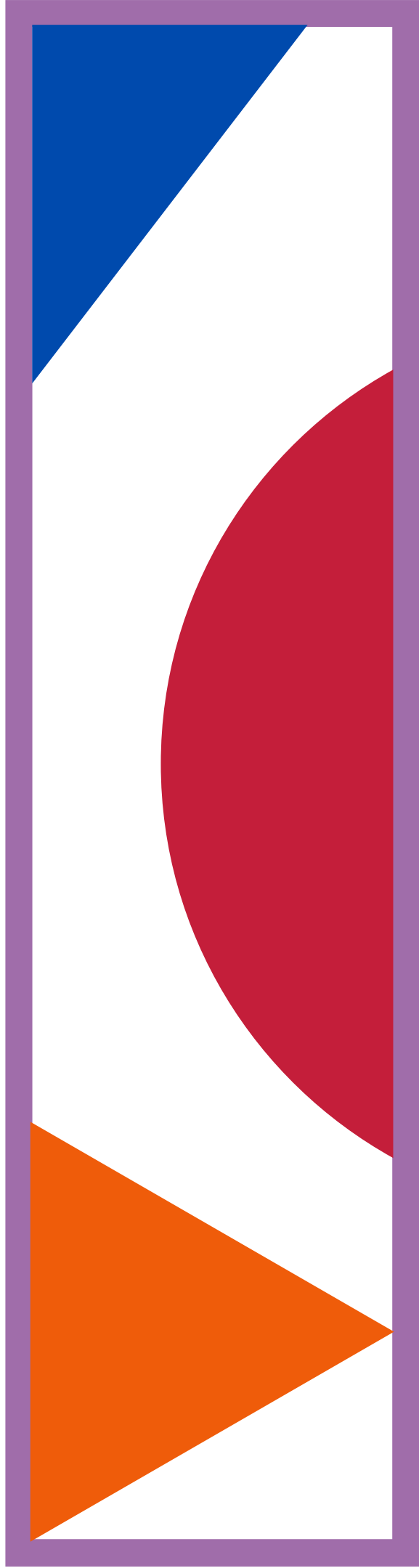


2 SECTION 1: OUR DUTIES

Here are some possible indicators that someone could be a young carer.

Physical	Emotional/Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often tired or withdrawn• Secretive or defensive about home life• Often late for school or missing days with no reason given• Lack of homework handed in• Working to a low standard• Regularly attending health appointments with family member• Showing signs of neglect• Behavioural issues• Parents not engaging with school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxious• Low self esteem• Secretive or defensive about home life• Lack of confidence• Often bullied• Depressed or low mood• Doesn't attend extra-curricular activities• Often appears to be worried about a family member• Appear isolated from peers• Low concentration/easily distracted

This list is not exhaustive and dialogue with the young person is the best way of identifying a hidden caring role.



3 SECTION 1: OUR DUTIES

Young Carers Statement

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, was implemented on the 1st April 2018 and contains a variety of measures which aim to help identify carers and offer a more comprehensive support system.

Under the new act, there is a duty placed upon the local authority to provide support to the young carer. This support is identified through a young carers statement.

Young carers statements were created as a means to ensure that a young person's caring role is appropriate to their age and development. The statement identifies the individual needs and personal outcomes of each young carer and is used to ensure they are provided with effective support to maintain their caring role should this be in their best interests.

It is the duty of any professional identifying a caring role to ensure that a young person has been offered a statement.

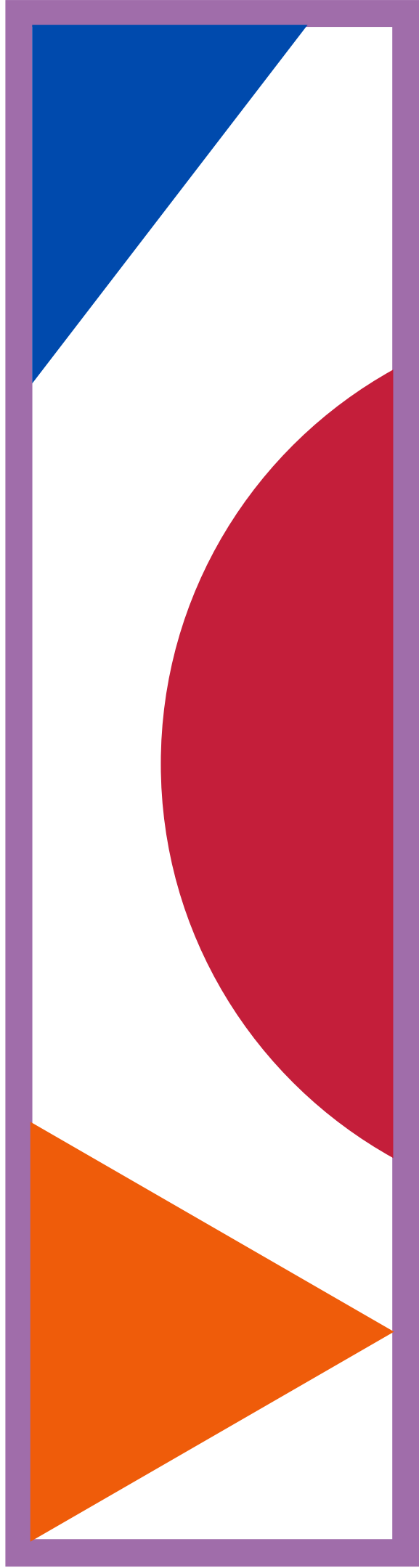
Please refer to the Professionals flowchart for more information.

The young carers statement is generally completed by one of the PKAVS young carers team, however if the young person does not want to be supported by PKAVS the duty then falls to schools or professionals within Perth & Kinross council who are involved in that young person's support. There is guidance to support professionals to complete the statement available here.

The young carers statement will identify personal outcomes for the young carer, and must contain information about:

- The impact of their caring role on the young person's health and wellbeing (referencing SHANARRI guidelines).
- The degree to which the young carer is able and willing to provide care
- The appropriateness of the care that they provide
- The support that they need if applicable.
- An agreed review date.

The statement will inform whether they meet local authority criteria for support and which level they will receive.



4 SECTION 1: OUR DUTIES

Levels of support

Referrals to PKAVS young carers can be made by; a professional working with the young person, a family member, or the young person themselves if they are over 12. Once a referral has been completed a member of the Young Carers Team will carry out an assessment and statement to gain a better understanding of the young person's caring role and the impact this is having on them. This will also identify the personal outcomes for the young carer and enable signposting to other agencies for family support if appropriate. Thereafter a decision will be made on what level of support they will be offered.

"I sometimes feel that teachers, workers and people are only there because they have to be and they don't actually listen"



SECTION 1: OUR DUTIES

Levels of Support

Green

Usually a secondary caregiver who has a low to moderate caring role and there are few or no negative impacts on their overall wellbeing.

Levels of support includes:
Regular reviews, telephone support, access to online support, invitations to one off YC events and drop-in sessions.

Amber

Usually a secondary care giver who has a moderate to high caring role but is managing fairly well with their caring role most of the time.

Support includes:
Advocacy, time limited 1-1 support, support to access other groups, respite groups, holiday respite activity programme, residential and family support/signposting.

Red

Usually the primary caregiver who's health and wellbeing is at crisis point.

Support includes:
Advocacy, time limited 1-1 support, respite groups, residentials, holiday respite programme, family support/signposting and support with transport to/from groups.



6 SECTION 1: OUR DUTIES

Case Study - Stephens Story

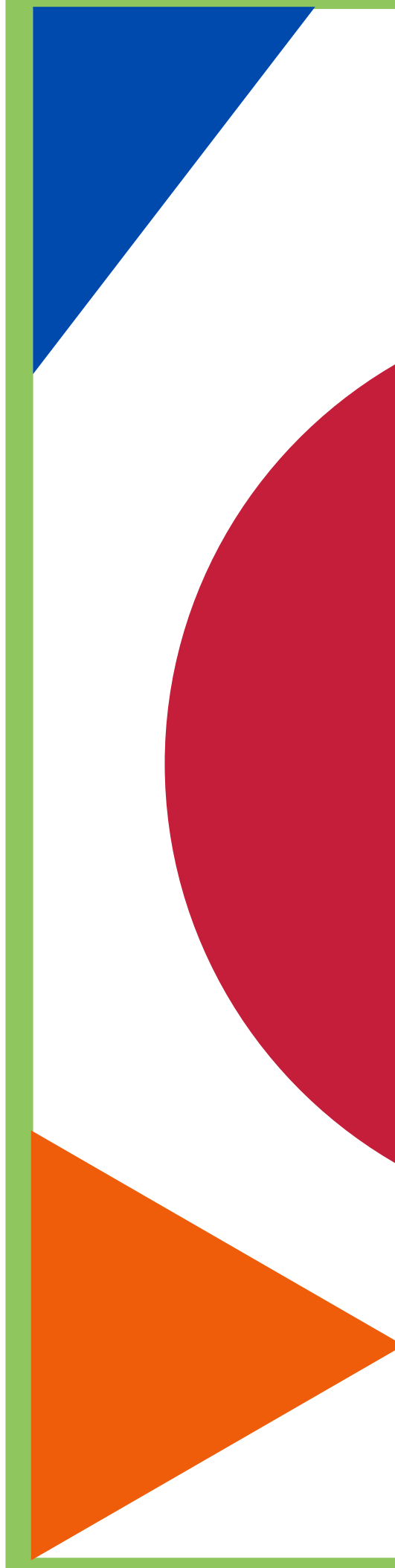
Stephen, 15, was referred into PKAVS Young Carers by school as his attendance and focus in school had become a concern. Stephen helps care for his brother who has a physical disability and learning difficulties. Stephen wakes up every morning at 6am to get his brother fed, changed and ready for school before he starts his own day. This responsibility has fallen to Stephen as Dad's mental health can affect his sleeping patterns.

Due to the significant impact his caring role was having on his education, wellbeing and confidence, Stephen was placed on the red level of support. Stephen informed his support worker that whilst he loves looking after his family he has little time to himself and misses out on things his friends are doing. Stephen and his support worker made a list of outcomes and goals to achieve and included them in the Young Carers Statement. This meant both Stephen and his support worker can keep track of progress and work towards his goals.

Stephen's support worker met with his guidance teacher at school to discuss his goals in education. Between his guidance teacher, parents, Stephen and his support worker, they came up with a plan to raise his attendance and focus on his subjects in order to get into college when he leaves school. All of these goals have been achieved and Stephen is looking forward to starting college after the summer and planning his future ahead.

Before his caring role had become so immersive Stephen had enjoyed playing rugby. Stephens support worker worked with Dad to ensure he received more support with his mental health which meant he was able to take back some of the supporting role for Stephens brother. Stephen received funding for equipment and lessons, which allowed him to get back to the sport he loved and have some well-earned respite. Stephen was also invited to go along to respite trips with PKAVS Young Carers. This meant he could spend some time with other young carers his age and take a break from his home life.

Whilst Stephen continues to care for his sibling and support his father he has more balance and access to respite and support from the adults around him. He continues to receive support from his support worker but he is now out of crisis and receives an amber level of support.



7 SECTION 2: PROFESSIONALS

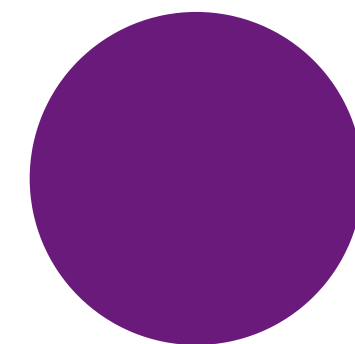
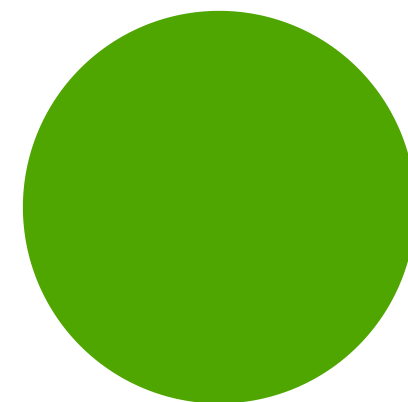
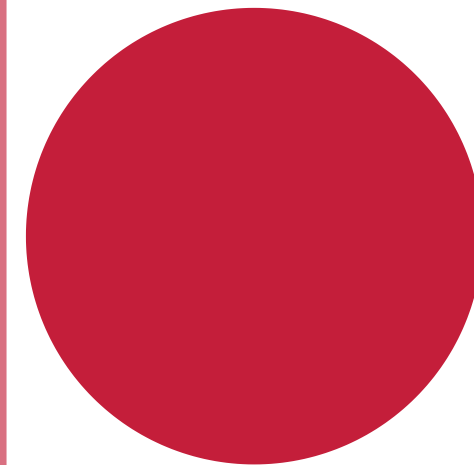
Practical advice

All young carers will have different backgrounds, experiences and needs. The most important thing you can do is to understand this and be aware that support needs will differ for each individual. Often small steps will make a big difference to the life of young carers. Regular reviews of their support will ensure young carers needs continue to be met appropriately. Here are some examples of support that young carers have found useful:

- Listen to the young person's perspective and be sensitive to their needs and home situation.
- Acknowledge that being a young carer is an additional support need and at times additional support plans will be appropriate and should be guided by the GIRFEC model.

- Appreciate that the home environment may not be conducive to homework or study. Offer flexibility and alternatives.
- Be mindful when planning after school activities as caring commitments may make extracurricular activities impractical. There may also be financial constraints for the family.
- Understand that leaving behind the person they care for and worrying about their safety can have a negative impact on attendance and concentration. Ensuring they are able to connect with the person they care for during the day can alleviate a lot of this anxiety.
- Ensuring there is a trusted adult available who has an understanding of the difficulties and concerns faced by young carers.

"it is not just down to teachers, it is everyone's job to make sure they are doing the best they can for carers"



8 SECTION 2: PROFESSIONALS

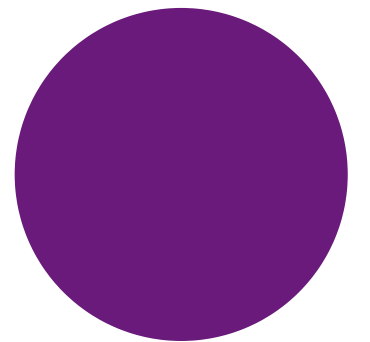
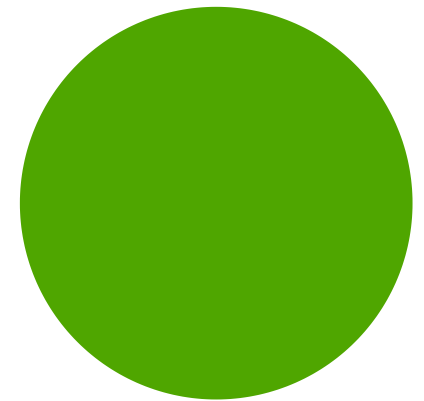
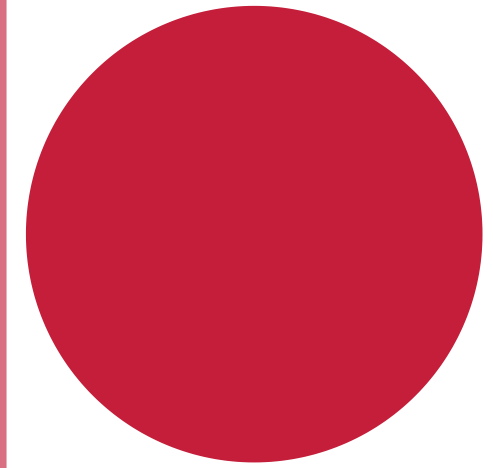
Young Carers e-learning module

This e-learning module is for anyone who would like to learn more about young carers.

The aim of the module is to:

- Increase your understanding of who young carers are.
- Increase your understanding of the impact of caring responsibilities.
- Increase your knowledge of laws and legislation related to young carers.
- Increase your knowledge of methods to support young carers .

A CPD certificate will be available for download once this module has been completed.



SECTION 2: PROFESSIONALS

Awareness raising.

There are 86 mainstream schools in Perth and Kinross. As we have identified, it is estimated that 1 in 10 young people are caring for a family member or friend. Whilst 20% of these are supported by PKAVS Young Carers and PKC Young Carers worker there is potentially 80% not receiving support. As a result in partnership with PKC, PKAVS have developed awareness raising workshops for young people and are aiming to reach all Perthshire schools.

Workshops have been developed to work with P1 up until S6.

We are also able to run workshops for staff.

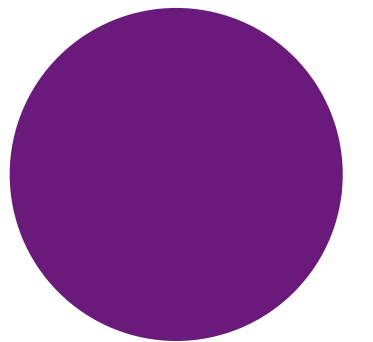
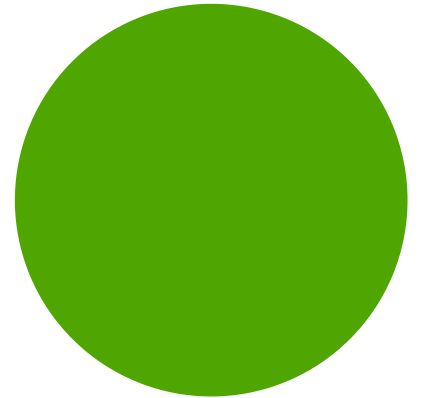
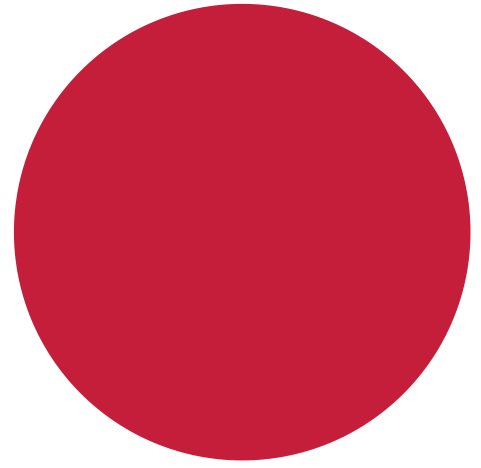
The purpose of the workshop are to:

- Raise awareness of the role that young carers have
- Identify hidden young carers
- Support schools to nominate a Young Carer Champion
- Work with schools to develop in-school young carers groups

Young Carers Awareness Podcast 2020

If you would like us to come to your school, please contact:

carershubadmin@pkavs.org.uk



SECTION 3: SCHOOLS

Young Carer Champions

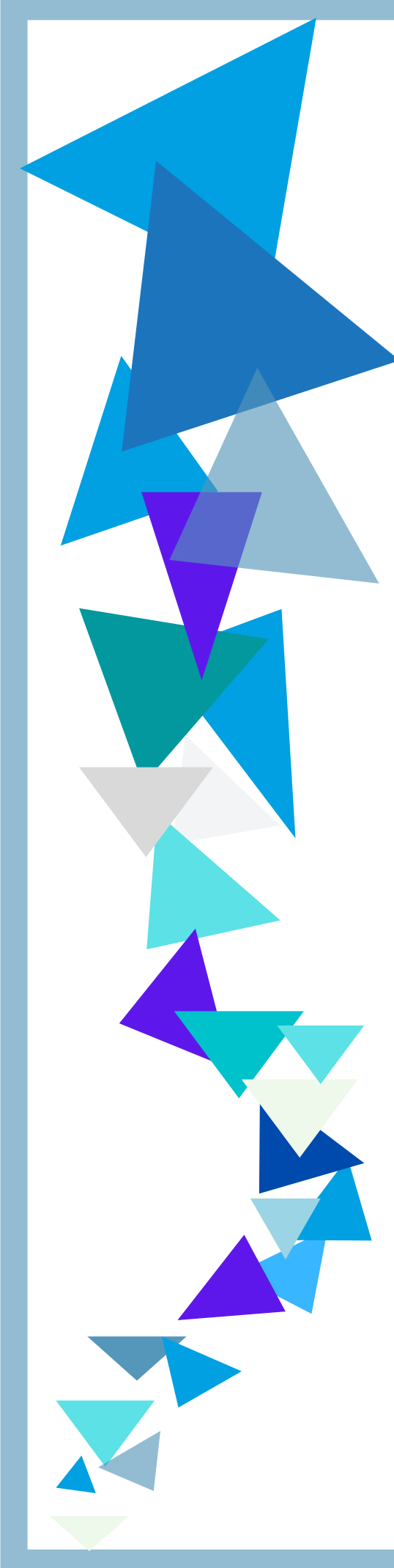
The intended outcomes of the awareness raising initiative is to identify a Young Carers Champion in all schools in Perth and Kinross. A Young Carers Champion is any member of the school staff team who would like to be involved supporting young carers. The role of the Young Carers Champion is to provide a link between school and PKAVS Young Carers team to facilitate good communication allowing for more robust support for young carers. All pupils will be made aware of who the YC champion is within their school. If appropriate, PKAVS and local authority can share any policies and training updates with YC champions which can then be shared with staff.

Some Young Carer Champions in schools across Scotland are supporting young carers by running Young Carers Clubs within school time.

This provides additional respite and allows young carers to:

- Have a safe space to talk about their role
- Know that they're not the only ones with caring responsibilities
- Do something fun and learn new skills

These have shown to help young carers feel more supported in school as well as improving concentration during class time.



SECTION 3: SCHOOLS

Young Carers Identification Card

Working alongside NHS Tayside and Perth and Kinross Council, PKAVS launched an identification card scheme for young carers across Perth and Kinross in January 2017. The identification card is available for all young carers aged between 5-16 years old.

The objectives of this service development are to enable young carers to:

- Be recognised as a young carer.
- Increase the confidence of the young carer to manage their caring role.
- Assist schools in identifying young carers and putting measures in place to support them.

In addition for those over 12 the card will:

- Allow medical professionals to share appropriate information with the young carer, at their discretion.



SECTION 3: SCHOOLS

Support with education

The Education Attainment Service sits within PKAVS young carers service. 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 their confidence and home life can often be chaotic. For many, schools can be a form of respite. However, schools are not always informed in regard to the home situation 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; the tuition is a blend of a person centred approach and the Scottish curriculum.



[Education Attainment Service Website](#)

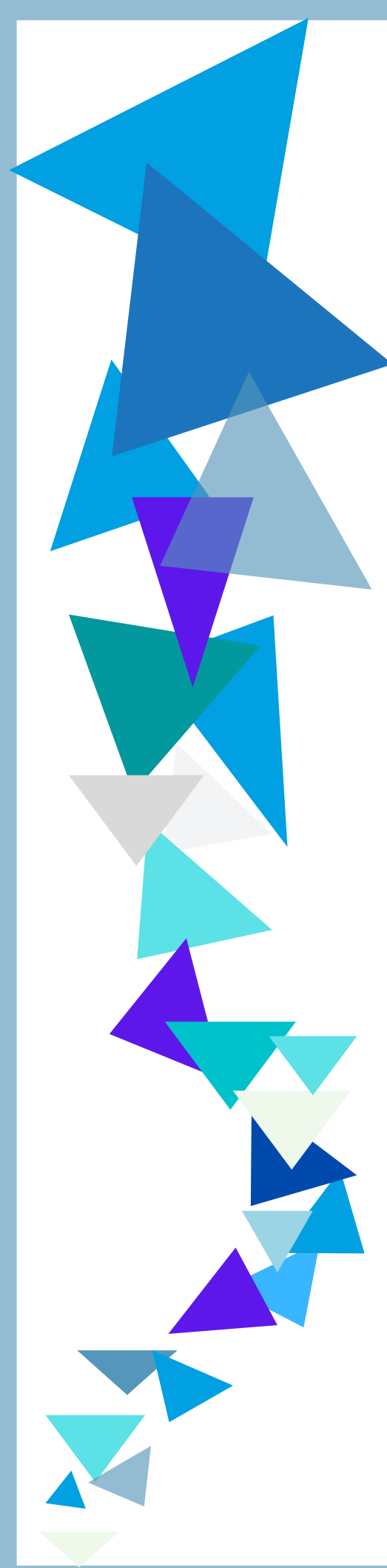
SECTION 3: SCHOOLS

Case study - Rachels Story

Rachel is a 13 year old girl who cares for her Mum who suffers from a neurological disorder. Rachel was well supported in primary school however the transition to secondary school was difficult and exacerbated by worries of homelife. Not all teachers have an awareness that Rachel is a young carer or the implications of this. As a result, incomplete homework or lack of attention in class has been put down to behavioural issues or rudeness and has caused Rachel to withdraw from education. In addition, Rachel has been recently diagnosed as having dyslexia and this has increased her anxiety regarding education.

The transition into secondary school and the deluge of work that followed only compounded Rachels anxiety over education and this impacted on family dynamics. As a result Mum referred her into the Education Attainment project at PKAVS Young Carers. Rachel identified that support with Maths and English would be beneficial.

The tutors worked with Rachel to uncover her interests and tailored sessions around these. Through her 1-1 sessions it has been identified that Rachel is working well above the level she was at school. Having the opportunity to work within her own learning style, Rachel is gaining confidence in her own abilities and this has had a positive impact on family dynamics.



14 SECTION 4: LISTEN TO US

Young Carers Voice

The Young Carer Voice is made up of a team of 8 young carers. The group meets once a month to discuss varying agenda items which affect the services and approaches put in place to support young carers. To date the team has been involved in making an awareness raising podcast, has provided feedback on documents & strategies relating to young carers and hope to feed in on a national level at some point.

We would encourage all services to seek the feedback from the Young Carers Voice when they are developing their supports for young carers.

The group always welcome fresh agenda items and guests to their meetings.

It is crucial that services continue to listen to our young people and allow services to be shaped by need. Our young carers have the best insight on the impacts of their caring role and their voices need to be heard.

"I like that I can help other young carers and help inform people who might know other young carers. Every young carers situation is different, we all want to not feel that we are just kids.

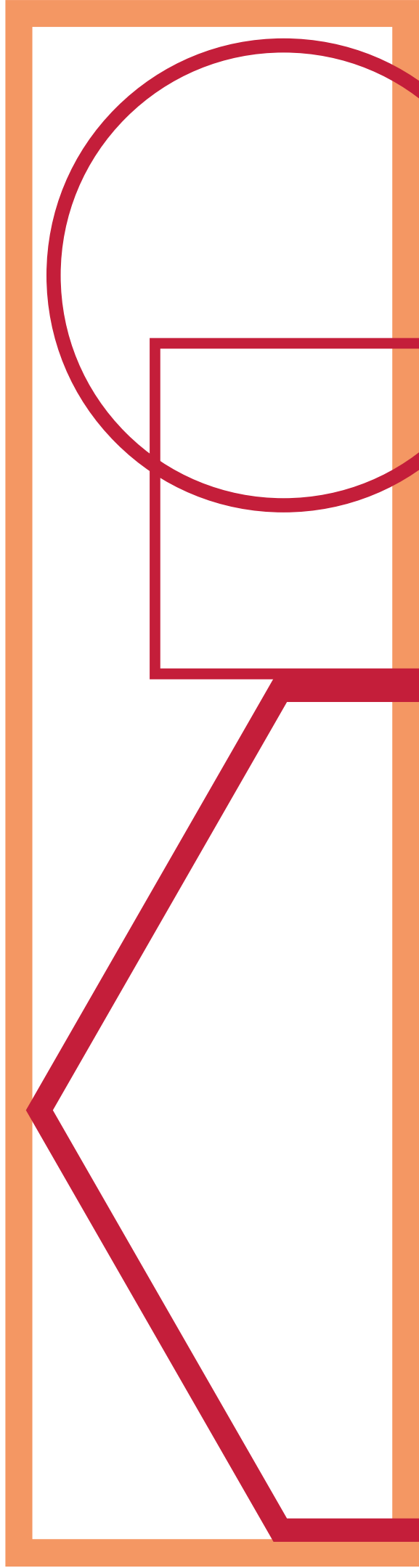
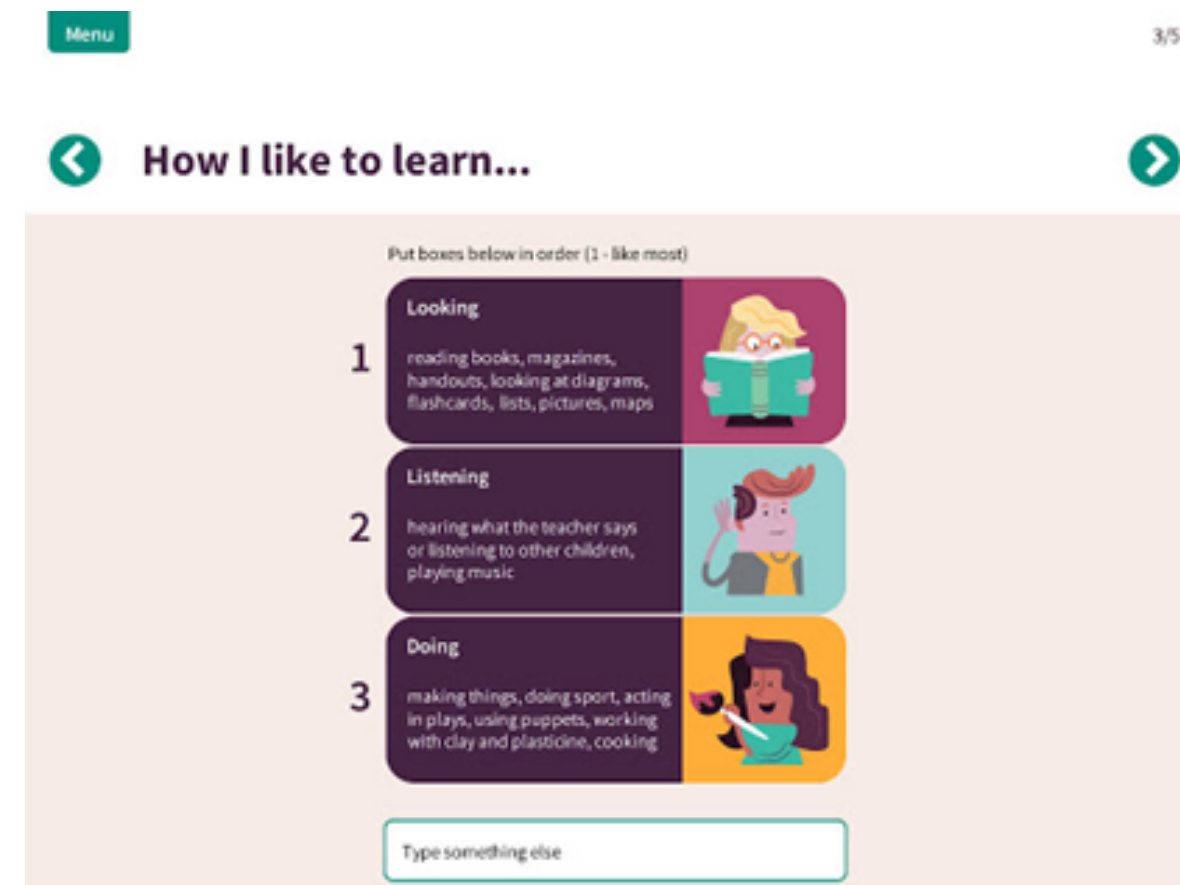
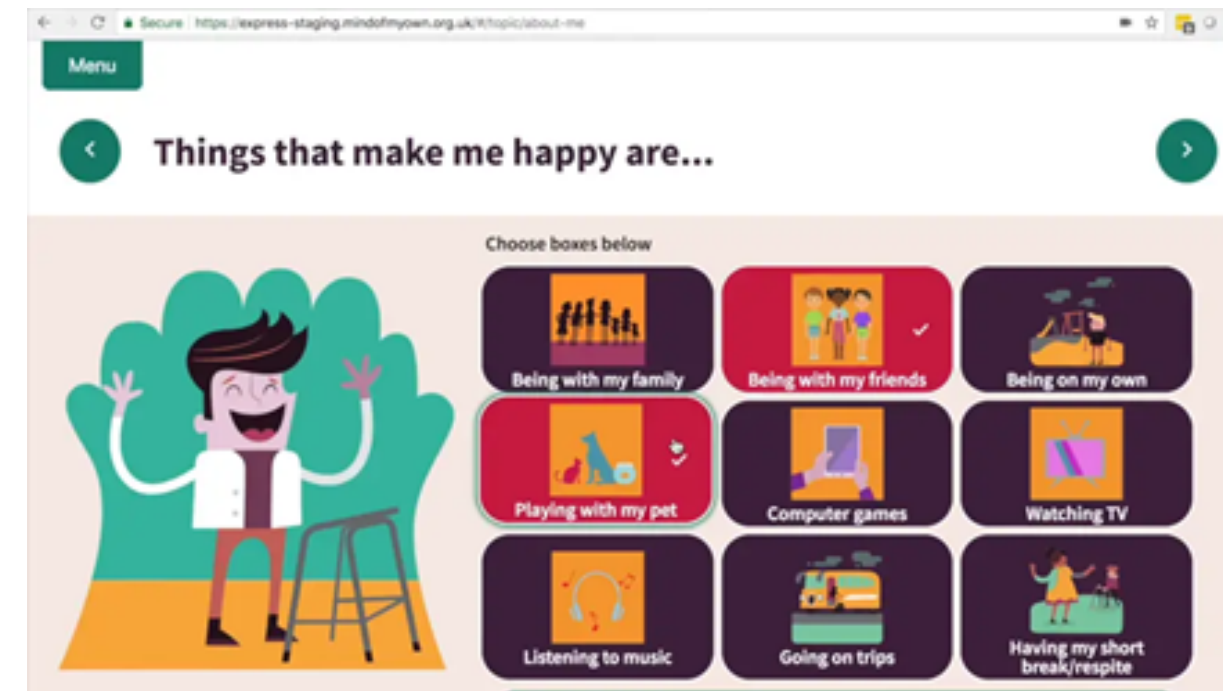
Being part of the group has made me more confident about telling people about what its like to be a young carer. I don't feel like they treat me any different. Some advice for other young carer is that there is a lot you can do, try letting people know, tell them what you want from them"

SECTION 4: LISTEN TO US



The mind of my own app was designed to encourage young people to share their thoughts and feelings through a child friendly, easy to use app. It enables children to share information confidentially, directly to their support worker about how safe and how happy they are feeling so they can assess their wellbeing more regularly and respond more quickly.

Perth and Kinross Council was one of the first Scottish local authorities to use this app back in 2017. This was initially used with looked after children however at the beginning of 2019 PKAVS began using this as part of their support with young carers. Since then 93 young carers accounts have been created allowing young carers to communicate how they are feeling or highlight any issues directly to their support workers.

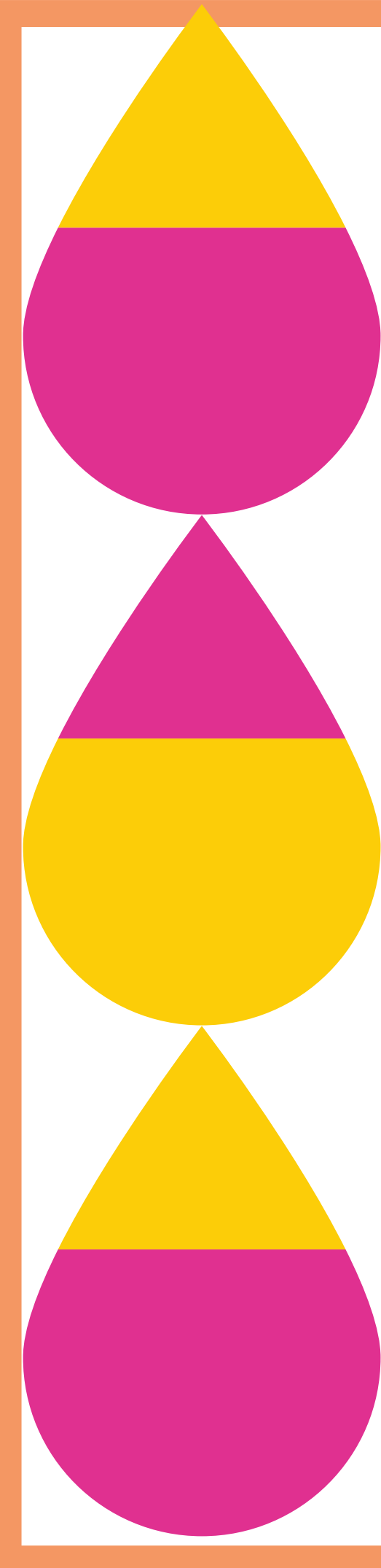


SECTION 4: LISTEN TO US



In June 2019 Young Scot launched their additional package for young carers. The card is for young carers between the ages of 11-18. This package is part of the Scottish Government's commitment to supporting young carers. As part of this commitment there is a grant available to young carers between the ages of 16-18.

The package includes discounts for many local eateries, cinema tickets, transport and much more. Each local authority has different discounts and Perth and Kinross have some great offers available.



SECTION 4: LISTEN TO US



Member of Relationships Scotland

The impact of caring can have big impact on family dynamics. Children's behaviour, their progress at school, their confidence, self-worth and mental well-being can really suffer as a consequence. PKAVS Young Carers are delighted to now offer 1-1 counselling for Young Carers at our Centre in Lewis Place for ages 8-18 years.

The sessions offer a safe space for young people to explore their feelings, to develop insight and to explore coping strategies to help become more resilient.

For further information please contact the PKAVS Young Carers Team on 01738 567076

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'It is everyone's job to support Young carers in P&K to have a life outside their caring role. To minimise the impact of that caring role and ensure they have a childhood we need to work together to identify and support YCs early as possible. The supports they will need vary and should be specific to their needs. This pack is designed to help professionals working with YCs in a variety of contexts to see them, hear them and support them in ways that allow them to be children.'

Sharon Cooper- Service Manager ECS, PKC

'Although the number of young carers living in Perth & Kinross being identified and supported increases year on year there are still a great many hidden young carers who need support in what can often be an all-encompassing caring role at home. This pack will help professionals across all sectors better understand the challenges faced by and the needs of young carers and how we can all work together to ensure young carers are identified and offered the support they need to lessen the impact that the caring role has on them and their childhoods.'

Raymond Jamieson - PKAVS Carers Hub Manager