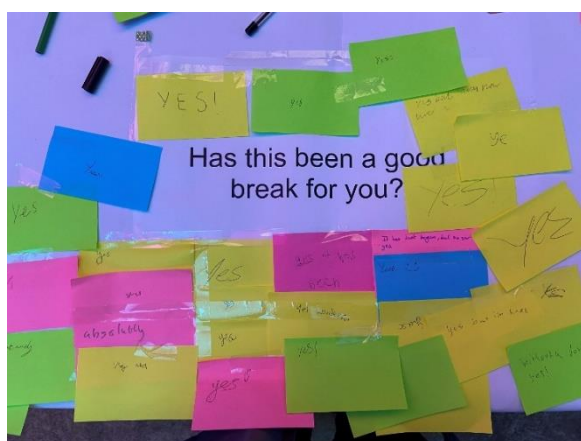


# Scottish Young Carers Festival

## 2024 Report



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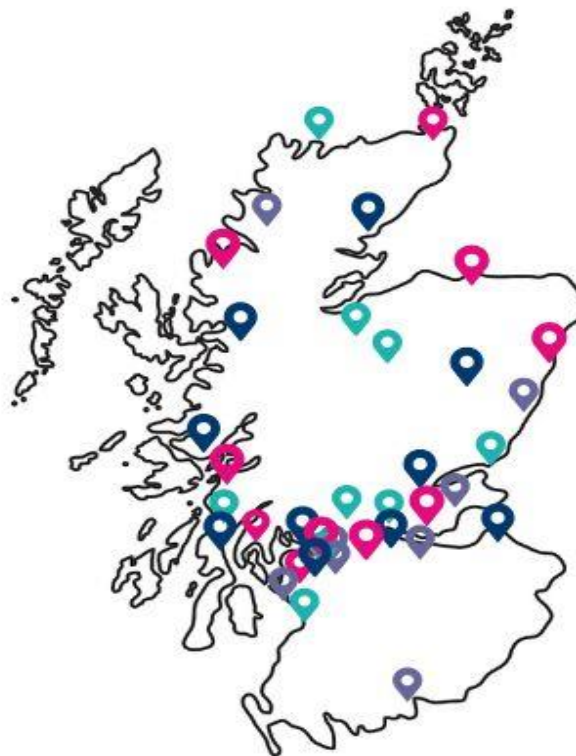
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## Event Summary

The following report collates the consultation and feedback gathered at the 17th Scottish Young Carers Festival (Festival), held from 7 August – 9 August 2024. This annual event, sponsored by the Scottish Government, provides young carers with; a much-needed meaningful break from their caring responsibilities, the opportunity to have fun, meet new friends and share their thoughts on key issues impacting their lives. This year's event welcomed 420 young carers with 107 young carer workers from 38 local carer organisations to the site for a welcomed three-day break from their caring role. Attendees came from a large geographical spread across Scotland (see Figure 1 below) and represented the diversity of young carers.

The event is for young people and has them at the heart of what we do. We host two youth-led initiatives which feed into the planning of the event and support youth voice. These programmes are Media Ambassadors and the Young Adult Carers Advisory Group. These groups were crucial in the planning of the event and at the event gathered young carers opinions, created media content and spoke to decision makers.



*Figure 1: Map of Young Carers Services who attended the Scottish Young Carers Festival*

We hosted a varied programme of activities, interactive consultation, wellbeing and live music across the three days, which had been designed in partnership with our Young Adult Carer Advisory Group. These included; outdoor education activities, live music, arts and crafts, a wellbeing zone filled with activities such as massages, mindful art, meditation and more.

Additionally, we had a dedicated space for consulting with young carers on issues that affect their daily lives in the “Feedback Factory”, where a diverse range of services that work with and for young carers - including Scottish Government departments (UNCRC, School Nurses and Transitions) could gain direct valuable feedback to inform their work. The programme also included the ‘Invited Guest’ section, this is where we invited decision makers, including the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, from across Scotland to meet with young carers and consult with them directly alongside experiencing the Festival for themselves.

As well as the support of the whole Carers Trust Scotland team, we had two interns through Robertson Trust to support us with the planning and the delivery of this year’s events. These interns were integral in the planning and delivery of the Young Adult Carers residentials, Feedback Factory, managing social media, ministerial briefings, administration and logistics across the whole event.



**It was incredible to see the Festival come together and to witness firsthand the positive impact it had on young carers. This experience reinforced the significance of my work and the importance of our collective efforts.**



**-Isla (Robertson Trust Intern)**



**Attending the Festival was particularly rewarding. As someone who has been a young carer myself, I know firsthand how crucial opportunities like this are for young carers.**



**– Maria (Robertson Trust Intern)**



## Activities

The activities programme is designed to support young carers to make new connections, meet likeminded peers, learn new skills and try new experiences that bring them joy. All activities for this year's Festival were picked through consultation with young carers and local carer services who were attending the event.

Upon arrival, young carers could get involved straight away with a choice of; inflatables, cool creatures (petting zoo), glammy station for Festival style hair and makeup, painting ceramics, drumming workshop, visit the Science Centre interactive activities, flag making and expressive painting, or have a massage. Also upon arrival to the site, young people received a Festival goodie-bag which included a Festival t-shirt, bag, water bottle, a rain poncho and a lanyard with a site map and a programme for the event. Young people and local carer service staff were provided by Carers Trust with pitched tents, sleeping bags and roll mats, and indoor accommodation was made available for those with specific requirements and access needs.



*Figure 2: Young People participating in Festival activities (Cool Creatures and Scouts Scotland)*

Our Wednesday evening kicked off with an Opening Ceremony, including the reveal of the Young Carer Games Flag, opening speech from the Festival organiser and a processional piper piped the attendees to the campfire with a live band, burger van, chillout space to play games, cinema and a disco.

This year, based on feedback from previous attendees, we introduced an Opening and Closing Ceremony. As the Olympics were held in 2024, we decided to give the Festival an 'Olympic' Theme 'The Young Carer Games – Unofficial Olympics'. We held a design competition with local carer services to design our logo (see Figure 3 & 4). Members of our Young Adult Carers Advisory Group voted for the winner.



Figure 3 : Design from Young Carers at North Argyll Carers Centre



Figure 4: Final Design of Olympic Logo

On the Thursday, we facilitated 21 activities across the site during the day and six evening activities. Young people could take part in outdoor activities facilitated by Scouts, including the zipline, 3G swing, waterslide, archery, and bungee trampolining. We had a diverse range of activities to suit as many young people's needs as possible and brought back many activities which in consultation pre-Festival were much sought after. One of which included cake decorating, which was possible due to a generous donation by Kiran's Trust funding. With thanks to Scottish Children's Lottery Trust, we were able to host our 'Wellbeing Zone', this was a space for attendees to focus on self-care and taking a physical break. In this zone, we hosted massages, guided meditation, upcycled arts and crafts workshops, mindful drawing and friendship bracelet making.

In order to make the Festival an inclusive space, we offered for the first time an indoor planetarium for the evening programme. The planetarium was programmed as an alternative activity to the noisier, high energy evening activities. This addition was very well received by attendees and by young carer service staff.

This year, we ensured that all young people had equitable access by making the event 'cashless' and provided a pre-paid burger or hot dog on both nights and a pre-paid ice cream or slush drink on the Thursday. We had vegetarian, vegan and gluten free options available at both vendors. We are committed to continuing this to ensure that all young carers - including those living in poverty - are having a full Festival experience. In addition to this, to support the attendance of local carer services, we were able to offer grants to help support the cost of attending, thanks to the grant funding provided by the Scottish Government.

### Key Statistics

**67%**

of young carers attended  
for the first time.

**74%**

of attendees felt more  
confident because of the  
Festival.

**86%**

of attendees felt they had  
their voice heard about  
being a young carer.

**91%**

of attendees made new  
friends and tried  
something new.

**96%**

**of attendees had a break  
from their caring  
responsibilities.**

**99%**

**of attendees said they had  
fun.**

## Marketplace

The marketplace was a space for young carers and local carer service staff to learn about services that can support them. We had the space open from 10am – 4pm on the Thursday and hosted 28 organisations. The organisations were:

Alcohol Focus Scotland  
Alzheimer's Scotland  
Child Friendly Complaints  
Citizens Advice Scotland  
Columba 1400  
Cruse Scotland  
Cyrenians  
Families Outside  
Fast Forward  
Forces Children Scotland  
Free Bus Travel  
Honeypot  
Luna Project (Leaflets)  
Kooth

MECOPP  
Mental Welfare Commission  
My Rights, My Say  
Penumbra  
Reach  
Respect Me  
Scottish Sports Futures  
Scottish Youth Parliament  
Scouts Scotland  
Shared Care Scotland  
Skills Development Scotland  
Sleep Action  
Social Security Scotland  
Young Scot

## As a result of the marketplace opportunity:

- Child friendly complaints had great conversations with young people about their service.
- The Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance are going to
- host sessions with marketplace providers to provide training for their staff on young carer awareness.



- Social Security Scotland gathered film footage to be used to help promote the Young Carer Grant.

### Feedback from marketplace providers:

Marketplace organisations had positive feedback from their experiences at the event. They valued the time to speak to service users directly and be able to have meaningful conversations. Organisations gained valuable insight to support their work with young carers in the future, and how they can continue their learning and development of resources for young carers. Providers also noted that it was a great networking exercise with other organisations, invited guests and young carer services.



**Many thanks for inviting us to a great Festival. It's always valuable to connect with young people and organisations to discuss the importance of sleep. XXX and I can both see that sleep is a major issue by the number of young people coming to ask about our service. The young carers have such a big responsibility in caring for family members (medication prompts, chores, etc.). ... Overall, the young carers expressed an interest in their sleep. The fact that many were willing to chat was a great starting point.**



**- Sleep Action**



**It was amazing to be at the Festival again and we met so many lovely young carers and stakeholders. Thanks again for having us there. We did manage to get some videos that we are using to promote the grant (Young Carer Grant), which is coming up for its 5 year anniversary. We had lots of people interested in Carer Support Payment too.**



**- Social Security Scotland**



**I can't speak highly enough of the Young Carer's Festival. Both XXX and I came away feeling unbelievably privileged and**



**inspired by having been there. What a fantastic and wonderful event for some absolutely amazing young people, well done!!**

– **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**

## **Invited Guests**

**[See full list of attendees at Appendix 3](#)**

On Thursday 8 August, 31 invited guests attended the Festival. Guests were met with a warm welcome from Carers Trust staff and a briefing from our Director for Scotland and two members of our Young Adult Carer Advisory Group. They spoke about their experiences of the Festival and the format of the day.

Although we have always strived to make the Festival a safe environment, this was the first year we took a focused trauma informed lens to it. We took this trauma informed approach to our invited guest and young carer experience by ensuring we covered the six principles of trauma informed practice<sup>1</sup>; safety, trustworthiness/ transparency, peer support, collaboration, empowerment of voices and choice and considering cultural, historical and gender based issues.

We paired up decision makers with young carers from their local area and the young people took them on a bespoke tour of the site. This meant young carers could show their favourite aspects of the Festival, speak to decision makers in a relaxed manner and spend quality time with them – around an hour. As part of their tours, they visited the ‘Feedback Factory’ (the consultation space) to see and hear what young carers had to say on key issues impacting them. Guests were invited to make a pledge on how they will support young carers in the next six months. We will continue to work with those who attended to progress their commitment to the young carers of Scotland. This guided tour format was successful, with positive verbal feedback from both young carers and invited guests.

The tours concluded with a performance from East Ayrshire Carers Centre in the main marque. They performed an excerpt from their young carer musical ‘Journey’. The purpose of the performance was to see and hear young carer stories and experiences through a powerful arts lens.



**In my opinion, the 2024 session worked best for allowing young carers to take the lead, they seemed to have time to prepare where to take their Invited Guests on tour, what they wanted to show them, what they wanted to tell them. This felt much more beneficial for me as**



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<sup>1</sup> [Trauma informed practice - NHS Safeguarding](#)

**a guest than previous years.**

**- NHS Education for Scotland employee**

## Decision Makers

[See Decision Maker pledges at Appendix 4](#)

Decision makers that attended the Festival were asked to complete a pledge to Scotland's young carers. We will continue to work with these decision makers to progress these pledges, and feedback progress to young carers and the services who support them.



*Figure 6 : Minister Maree Todd and Young Carers from the Highlands on guided tours of the Festival site*



**If people know their rights, they are much more likely to be upheld. So I think that is going to be my focus for next year, is to make sure that people know what their rights are, and then there's a chance that they'll be able to see them made real.**



– **Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport**

## Carer Voice

### Media Ambassadors Programme

Ten young people took part in our Media Ambassador Programme this year. In July 2024, participants undertook a training residential to develop their media skills, including storytelling, camera work and using sound and recording equipment. The residential training also allowed for young people to bond with like-minded young carers from across Scotland, practice their interview techniques, camera skills, and devise the focus of their films and media content.

At the Festival, Media Ambassadors filmed content and interviewed many young carers and decision makers for their final films. They spoke with all decision makers who visited the Feedback Factory, including Provost Jim Leishman, Paul Sweeney MSP, Gillian Mackay MSP and they had held an interview with the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport – Maree Todd MSP. These films were premiered at Carers Parliament on 27 November 2024.

This years' films and media themes were:

**Decision Maker Support: How decision makers can support young carers by advocating with them. - <https://bit.ly/Decisionmakers>**

**Echoes of Care: How caring is still on your mind when taking a physical break. - <https://bit.ly/Echoesofcare>**

**Educators Support: How educators in schools/colleges/universities can support young carers in education. There is also sound bites of young carers expressing their views - found [here](#).**

**Scottish Young Carers Festival: What it is like to experience the Festival. - <https://bit.ly/sycf2024>**



**In my opinion the Media Ambassadors programme has been amazing, it has helped me grow as a person and learn so much and I couldn't recommend it to anyone else enough.**



**– Media Ambassador**



**My first highlight of the Festival was being able to be a part of the Media Ambassadors' group. This was a highlight for me because I was able to express my thoughts, feelings and emotions on things in a safe environment with no judgements. I also got to help produce media content that will hopefully help young carers in the future and work with an amazing group of people. My second highlight was being able to speak to decision makers as this made me actually feel heard and get to know them better which made me feel more confident on speaking about my thoughts/ideas.**



**– Media Ambassador**





*Figure 7 : Media Ambassadors cohort 2024 with Media Education staff Shaun Glowa and Ania Urbanowska*

## Peer Researchers

### [See full data at Appendix 6](#)

Our Young Adult Carer Advisory Group members were also consulting attendees as 'Peer Researchers'. These findings inform their national awareness raising activity, which will be launched later in 2025. They engaged with attendees through a range of creative research activities from interactive games, quick fire questions and a podcast station for young people to verbally share their thoughts.

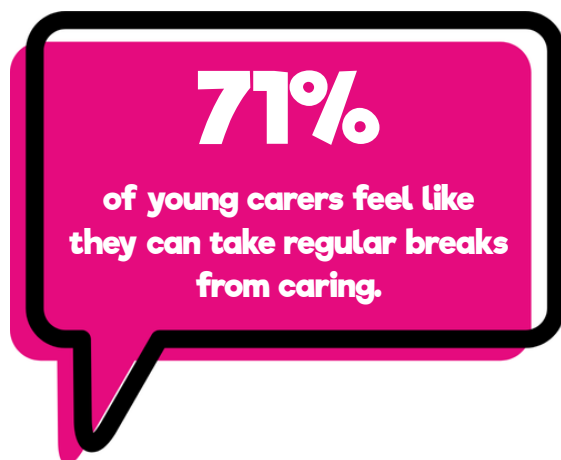
In July 2024, the peer researchers attended a training residential for upskilling and to meet likeminded peers. The young people took part in a series of workshops and wellbeing activities, including; workshops from Scottish Youth Parliament and Scottish Parliament's Participation and Communities (PACT) Team, as well as Carers Trust Scotland's Research and Involvement Officer delivering a practical peer research skills workshop.

The young people worked together to decide a theme for their questions to ask at the Festival, and devised a range of fun, quick fire interactive and accessible activities to deliver the research questions. For example, throwing bean bags into "Yes/No" buckets, a graffiti wall, a washing line to pin up opinions and playing Peer Researcher Pong (bouncing ping-pong balls into cups to answer quickfire questions and a place for writing pledges). This allowed young carers from a range of backgrounds and ages to take part in the research.

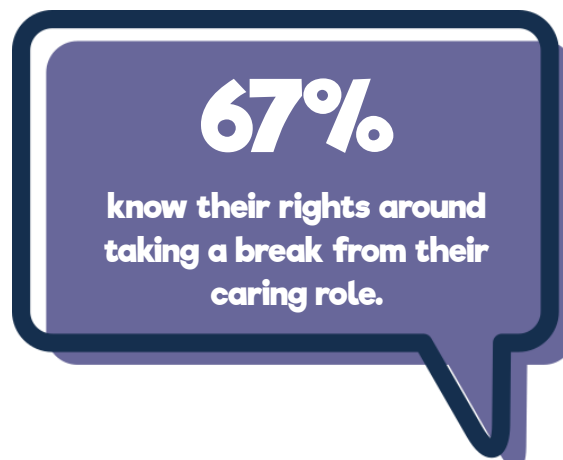
## Quick Fire Questions - Bean Bag Throwing

### Breaks

- **Total 80 Participants**



- **Total 81 Participants**



### Comments from young carers around the Young Carer Grant:



**You can only get the Young Carers Grant for one person per household. If there are two young carers in the household only one can get it.**



**It is something that is excellent... if you know about it.**



Many reported that there needs to be an increase of awareness from professionals who make decisions around young carers, and how there needs to be a deeper understanding of what caring roles can look like. Many also reported that they want to be supported to do their caring role as they want to be able to do both caring and be able to live their own life.

### Feedback Factory Space

This space was previously known as the 'Consultation Zone'. Through consulting with young carers prior to the event, feedback was that they did not fully understand the name and what the space was about. We asked for new names and ideas from young carers and settled on Feedback Factory.

This is an important space for young carers to have their voices heard and valued and be able to give crucial feedback on issues that are affecting their daily lives. The space provides key stakeholders with the opportunity to understand young carer perspectives and experiences.

This year's theme was the United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child (UNCRC) as it passed into law in 2024. We based our questions around key themes and Articles that affect young carers across Scotland the most.

There were a variety of ways for young people to engage with the topics to meet the needs of different learning styles and a range of ages. These activities included: a podcast station of people to speak their thoughts, Worry Monsters for young carers to express their opinion and place it in a safe place, our graphic facilitator to listen and visually express their opinions and many group tables with pens and post it notes for writing, drawing and more. The diverse range of consultation allowed for young people to speak freely and gather in depth qualitative and quantitative data.

The young people engaged with decision makers this year with around **53%** of attendees visiting the Feedback Factory and **one fifth** speaking directly to decision makers.

## Summary of all research findings from Feedback Factory



Figure 8 : Young Carers contributing to the Feedback Factory

- From the data provided by young carers, it is clear that **the rights of young carers are not fully realised by many across Scotland**. Young carers asked for there to be a guide around UNCRC. On 'Carers Rights Day' 2024 Carers Trust launched a 'Know your rights' online young carers guide which can be found [here](#), this resource should be able to support young people in understanding if their rights are being upheld and equipping them with the knowledge to challenge if not. It is clear from the evidence that young carers are lacking education on their rights, and how to support them being upheld. There are many rights that need to be upheld for all young people, but the general consensus is that there is more to be done to support the rights and lives of young carers across Scotland.
- **Young people vocalised that there is more support needed from school settings, healthcare professionals and community settings** – places where young carers spend most of their time. Young people also highlighted that they would like to be part of the conversation on topics that affect their lives. An increase in meaningful and accessible opportunities for them to access and to see proof that their opinions are valued and important.



- **Access to education is crucial** and being able to ensure that access is a right. Young carers feel that it is not being upheld through personal experiences. Young carers are reporting experiences of being offered varied support across the country, they are asking for a more flexible approach to mainstream education to support their learning and their caring role. Many young carers have bright ideas for their futures and want to achieve great things, in some cases with additional barriers preventing them achieving them. They are asking for more support in balancing the demands of their education work and the responsibilities of their caring role.
- **Young carers voiced their worry around finances, and the opportunity to access grants.** Financial support is vital for young carers to have a break from their caring role and increased financial security. Young carers are calling for more information around grants and financial opportunities for young carers aged 16+. Some young carers stated they are managing to spend some time with their friends and having some form of break from their role. These ideal breaks are very achievable asks from hanging out with friends to listening to music and just getting out of the house.

## Feedback Factory Findings

[See full data at Appendix 5](#)

We focused on the following UNCRC Articles for consultation in the Feedback Factory:

- **Article 3:** Best interests of the child
- **Article 4:** Implementation of the Convention
- **Article 12:** Respect for the views of the child
- **Article 17:** Access to information for the media
- **Article 26:** Social Security
- **Article 28:** Right to education
- **Article 29:** Goals of education
- **Article 31:** Leisure, play and culture.



### Article 3: Best interests of the child

*The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.*

The feedback from young people was that a majority of those that participated were **not aware of all of their rights as a young person and as a young carer**. We devised questions based around the UNCRC to find out what areas needed more support.

We asked questions around whether young people felt considered in decisions made about their lives.

**34% of respondents reported that they felt considered sometimes or always in decision making.**

**66% stating that they felt they were not considered at all in decision making.**

### School Nurses Team

The School Nurses Team at the Scottish Government consulted attendees on awareness of roles in schools for young carers, what knowledge do they need to have to be able to provide the best support and what support they think they should be receiving from school nurses. Awareness of school nurses' responsibility to support the health and wellbeing needs of young carers was low with **86%** reporting they were not aware that there were school nurses.

Many of the young carers that took part would like to be supported by school nurses around stress, anxiety and general mental health support. There were also calls for further support around panic attacks, how to balance schoolwork, studying and their caring role, as well as being someone to listen to them.



Figure 9 : Graphic Facilitator image – It's great to use our voice

## Article 4: Implementation of the Convention

*Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights.*

The topic of young people's rights was incorporated into all the consultation with young carers. We asked young people if they have a good understanding of their rights as a young carer. **50%** of respondents reported having a good knowledge, **25%** knowing some rights and **21%** reporting of not having a good knowledge about their rights and **4%** unsure.

When asked what would help young carers understand their rights, attendees called for an easy-to-follow guide, more information to be provided to schools for teaching, more information on social media and more information from Scottish Parliament for knowledge and reference.

On a more local level, **78%** would like to see more school support (including visits to schools from UNCRC leads) **11%** want visible information at local GPs, health centres and **11%** want information available at local newspapers and community meetings.

## Article 12: Respect for the views of the child

*Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.*

Article 12 is one of the most relevant and important rights for young carers across Scotland. We asked young people if they felt that they had the chance to share their views as a young carer as much as they would like to.

67% of participants reported that there are opportunities available to share their views. Although there are not enough for young carers to access or opportunities available to a wide number of young carers.



**I can but my mum wants me to look after my sister and when I say no or complain she gets angry.**



**There are opportunities to share my voice like Media Ambassadors but there definitely could be more.**



**There are a few opportunities, but a few more would be beneficial**

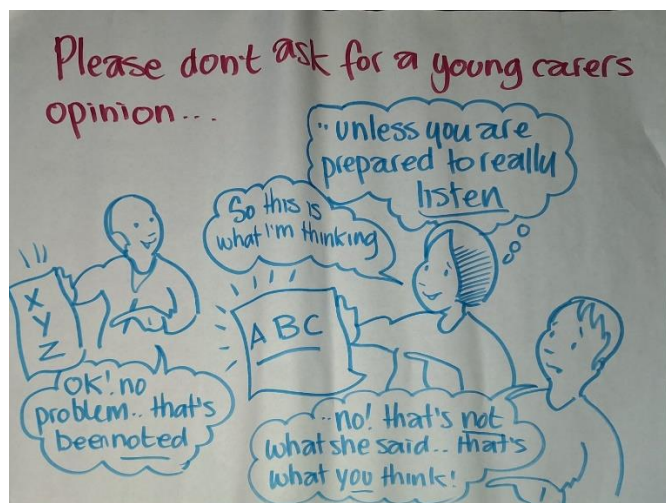


Figure 10 : Graphic Facilitator Image – Please don't ask for a Young Carers opinion unless you are prepared to

We followed up with what would support young carers to share their views. 56% of respondents reported that they would like 'more' chances to speak, be heard and recognised.

Also there to gather the opinions and views of young carers was NHS Education for Scotland. They asked if people at the chemist/pharmacy had ever asked them if they were a young carer, **100%** of respondents replied No. NHS Education for Scotland also asked young carers if they had been refused prescribed medication by the doctor for cared for person and **100%** of respondents responded Yes. One young carer expressed the rationale given to them.



**As the medication is usually for over 18s, and no adult was present.**



The final question posed by NHS Education for Scotland was whether a doctor had ever helped young carers to be recognised as a young carer, to help collect medication at a chemist/pharmacy. **36%** of respondents replied Yes and **64%** responded No.

### **Article 17: Access to information for the media**

*Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.*

This article supports young people being able to understand media and information in a way that is accessible and easy to process. We asked young people if they felt they had access to all the information they need or would like to support them as young carers; **77%** reported **Yes** and the other **23%** reported Sometimes or Maybe. The majority of respondents reported receiving this information from local carer services.

### **Article 26: Social Security**

*Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.*

Financial pressure and worries is a topic that is frequently talked about with young carers, so the Social Security Scotland team came along to the Festival to find out about young carers' knowledge of financial support.

**74%** have heard of the Young Carer Grant for young carers aged 16-18 years old. Others noted that they found out about the grant through workshops or staff members at their local carers service.

For those who have received Young Carer Grant, the impact was great. **63%** reported it allowed them to have a break, with others reporting it gave them more freedom, free time and more financial security:



**I worry about my parents money – This would give me more security.**



Many young carer respondents reported that they do not think unpaid carers get enough financial support, they think this is because of poverty, still in education, and that all unpaid carers should be paid for the work that they do.



**No, they don't as most of us live below the poverty line, we also don't want to advertise we are young carers and most of the house money goes on the family.**



**No because many of us are still in Education. As well so can't pursue a job at the time but still need to care for someone.**



**Definitely now being a carer is a job. They should get paid the same wage as a working person. - all carers should be paid.**



As part of our consultation work, we also asked some questions from Young Scot around the Young Scot Young Carer Package. Respondents offered ideas on how to raise awareness of the package by mentioning it to schools and coming to local carers group sessions, make signs and hiring billboards.





Figure 11: Graphic Facilitator image – Unpaid Carers need more financial support

## Article 28: Right to education

*Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.*

*Supporting young carers in education is vital, we asked the following questions to find out what support is still needed for young carers and how do we ensure their rights are upheld.*

**44%** of those that participated reported that they do not feel supported in school as a young carer, **36%** report they receive some support and **20%** report the support is infrequent or not very useful to them. The support reported from young carers is varied from school to school and other educational setting:



**They don't have a clear understanding, but they have been told numerous times.**



**My senior teachers see me as a statistic, my pastoral teachers sees me as a person to.**





**We have a dedicated person for young carers to go and talk to.**



**My teacher supports me by having daily check ins/ a quiet space.**



When asked what further support they would like to see in education for young carers **73%** asked for further support from professionals.

### Article 29: Goals of education

*Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.*

We asked what hopes young carers had for their education in the future. **33%** reported going on to college/university and **53%** said they would go into the workforce and quoting specific paths and jobs. Many of which range from being writers, social care workers, nurses, charity workers and in education settings.

We also asked about fears for their education in the future. **13%** responded that they have dyslexia and worry that learning disabilities will be a factor of failure. **26%** reported worry over exam failure with many also concerned with not receiving bespoke support to excel, financial issues, bullying and worrying about having to look after their cared for person, and also not being able to follow their own passions.

We looked at the balance between their caring role and their education, **48%** that responded felt unsupported with this balance and **36%** felt they are supported with **16%** stating they felt supported Sometimes:



**It doesn't impact my education physically, but emotionally it does.**



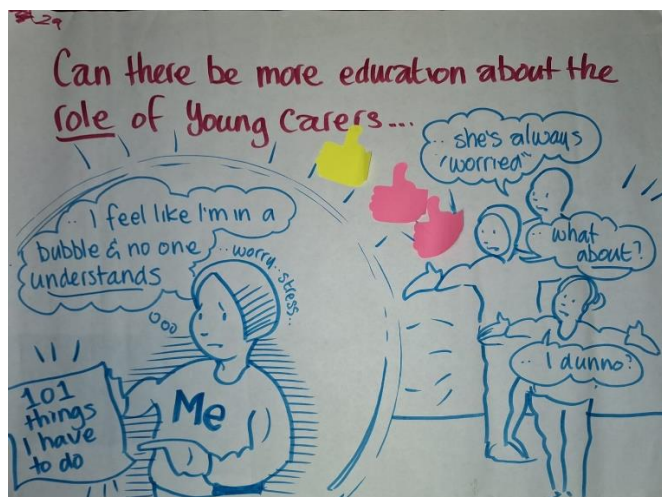


Figure 12: Graphic Facilitator image – Can there be more education about the role of Young Carers

### Article 31: Leisure, play and culture

*Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.*

Every child has the right to relax and play, however this right can be most impacted by a caring role. We wanted to know how the access to relaxation, play and cultural activity was for young carers across Scotland.

**44% of young carers reported they get to spend over six hours a week with friends outside of school with 56% reporting under six hours.**

**The frequency of these breaks varied with 56% reporting that they get a break once a week, 13% reporting they get a break once a fortnight and 31% reporting that they get a break once a month.**

We looked at what an 'ideal' break to them looked like and many responded with 'hanging out with friends', doing something active, listening to music and just in general getting out of the house.

## Graphic Facilitator Findings

[For full collection of images see Appendix 8](#)

As part of the Feedback Factory and the consultation process, we had a graphic facilitator to capture young carers' thoughts, feelings and grasp the key points being raised in conversations. We had the facilitator to offer support to young carers to give their opinion in a different way through discussion and imagery. These sketches were hung up around the space for people to place 'thumbs up' sticky notes on the ones that resonated with them the most.

These images most young carers resonated with the most were around.

- The pressures of being a young carer.
- It doesn't feel helpless to help.
- The tricky balance of caring, education and support.
- The Festival is an amazing place to mix and meet friends.
- Support doesn't need to be rocket science.
- We never have 'same old, same old' days.
- You can't put caring in a box.
- It's great when our voice is heard
- Young Carers have so many great ideas about Young Carers.

## Carers Trust Scotland Actions

Carers Trust Scotland will use these findings in its awareness raising and project work, as well as to inform the planning and execution of future Festival events. Carers Trust has outlined the following actions and recommendations to ensure another quality event and support young carers services.

## Consultation Findings

Carers Trust will take all the findings from the Feedback Factory and work with relevant organisations, the representatives for young carers at Scottish Youth Parliament, consult further with young carers and government to improve the work around the following areas:

- Young people and education/healthcare professionals need to know more about young peoples' rights and the rights that relate to young carers.
- More flexible approaches to supporting young carers in education.
- Young carers opinions need to be taken seriously and have their voices heard and valued as part of the conversation in decisions that affect their lives, and the lives of their cared for person.
- Breaks are crucial – both physically and mentally.
- Easier access to financial grants and financial support.
- Greater societal understanding of young carers by people in positions of decision making.

It is important to act on these findings, demonstrating to young carers that they are a driving force in the direction and priorities of Scottish Government, local government, Carers Trust Scotland, the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance and the decision makers that attended the Festival.

## Awareness Raising Work

These findings demonstrate that young carers need greater support in knowing and upholding their rights. Carers Trust Scotland will work closely with the Scottish Government UNCRC Policy Team to create accessible resources for young carers and local carer services staff to ensure they have a greater knowledge of their rights and that they can increase their confidence to challenge when they are not upheld. These findings around education will feed into Carers Trust Scotland's 'Caring is Learning' education programme which is developing interventions to help young carers to be able to fulfil their aspirations and not be disadvantaged due to their



caring role. This programme also includes a Young Carers Education Expert Panel, who will be co-designing awareness-raising resources and leading a national education campaign, and recruitment for the panel started at this year's event. We will also work collaboratively with organisations such as Young Scot, Social Security Scotland and wider Scottish Government teams to ensure information is accessible to young people. Partnership working with organisations - such as Education Scotland and NHS Education for Scotland - will ensure practitioners are aware of who young carers are and what support they need.

This data and findings will inform Carers Trust Scotland's two Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) in their work. MSYPs represent young carers, aged 12 – 25, and consultation with their constituents informs national awareness raising, Members' Motions, participation in media opportunities and national events with key decision makers. These findings will support MSYPs and their consultation work to help shape their decisions as youth representatives for young carers in Scotland.

The various modes of consultation provide different resources that can be used by Carers Trust Scotland in awareness raising activity and work streams across the organisation. This is including the work around **Young Carers Action Day** in 2025 – looking at breaks for Young Carers. This also includes the graphic facilitator images and videos created by the Media Ambassadors. We will share the pictures and sound bites made by the Media Ambassadors through our social media channels and will circulate with Young Carer services. This feedback will also inform awareness raising activities led by our Young Adult Carer Advisory Group, this awareness raising will run throughout 2025 and will be continuously involving consultation from young carers, young carer workers and external organisations to support the work.

### Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance

Carers Trust Scotland and the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance provides consultation responses (see appendix 7) on issues relating to children and young people. The responses are written with the interests, opinions and rights of young carers in mind and so the consultation at the Festival provides clarity on young carers' feelings and needs in particular areas.

The Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance meetings are integral to the consultation findings and supporting the Festival. The meetings inform Festival based consultation as external organisations are invited to work with the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance based on issues highlighted by its members. Since the Festival, the Scottish Government's UNCRC team have already met with the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance and will be hosting workshops at their annual conference in February 2025.

## Reflections

### Taking a Trauma informed approach

We adapted the Invited Guests section – from the previous format of speed chatting to this year a guided tour led by the young people - attendees claiming:



**More chances to speak to the one person – to talk about more broad topics and discuss more**



This new approach was to give the Young Carers autonomy over the conversation, let them tailor their experience and to create a more relaxed environment. This was to incorporate our trauma informed approach which is implemented across the whole event.

This was incorporated especially into the 'Feedback Factory' consultation. It was remarked that in the previous year that there were much younger carers wanting to engage with consultation activities and needed additional support to do so. This year we thought about the wider needs of young carers who wanted to interact with the Feedback Factory activities. We ensured we had a wider variety of ways to interact with consultation questions. We offered a podcast station, quick fire questions, drawing stations and more to provide a wider range for wider needs of young carers.

### Adaptations to the event

We introduced a dedicated faith space to the site to make sure all attendees could practice their faith in a quiet and safe environment. This was particularly important as we had attendees who were observing regular prayers throughout the day and this meant they could access the event and prioritise time and space to practice their faith. We also created a dedicated 'Wellbeing Zone' for young people to focus on their physical and mental health needs and take some time for themselves.

Young carers remarked on the diversity of the programme and the range of activities available, from high-energy to calm and quiet spaces, and a wide-ranging mix of in-between. This was responsive to attendees needs, as we had many attending who need some quiet time and space to unwind. For young people attending with heightened sensory overload/neurodivergences, we provided quiet night time activities to accommodate for this.

### Donations and Funds

We received many generous donations and funds to support the successful running of this year's event. We would like to thank for their generosity:

**Scottish Children's Lottery** for donating £3,000 to support our 'Wellbeing Zone.'

**Eyemouth Rotary** for donating £1,500 to support our live bands on both evenings.

**Kiran's Trust** for continuously donating £1,000 to support our much beloved Cake Decorating workshop and Upcycling Crafts session.

**Bute Energy** for donating £500 to cover the cost of our well-loved pottery painting activity, and for volunteering at the event.

**Stephens Bakery** for £10 voucher for their baked goods to feed volunteers.

**LUSH** for donating around 300-400 bath bombs, soaps and other products to be able to give to attendees.

**Swizzles Matthews** for donating many sweets for attendees to enjoy over the course of the event.

**Tunnocks** for donating many Caramel Wafers for attendees and Young Carer workers to enjoy over the course of the event.

**People's Postcode Lottery** for volunteering at the event and supporting with set up of the event and handing out goodie bags.

**British Gas** for volunteering and supporting the main day of the event.

## Learnings

Feedback is integral to an event of this kind and magnitude, young carers had a positive experience and break while having the opportunity to have their voices heard, appreciated and valued and be a part of the conversation going forward.

## Funding considerations

With the rise of cost of living and infrastructure costs, we had some funding restraints which led to some issues that had to be overcome. To ensure we could facilitate all the needs of attendees and cater for all, we had to cap the number of attendees at this year's event to 15 young people per service. Young carer services fed back that there was a high demand for spaces and they had waiting lists of up to 50 young people wanting to attend.

To keep costs lower this year we hired a new catering company and this allowed us to spend more money on activities for attendees, the catering had a negative impact due to lack of hot food and unreasonable waiting times at the event and will not be used in the future. To mitigate this for next year's event, the Youth Engagement Officer will work closely with catering companies to manage expectations better and ensure this does not happen again. Alternative food options will also be considered,

including more food vans, as the current evening food van rates very positively by attendees.

To ensure the sustainability of the Festival we are looking to build and strengthen partnerships with other funders, businesses and organisations who can help support with volunteers, funds and donations. We have also looked at other sites to host the Festival to try and keep costs lower for future events.

### Activities

We received feedback that young people wanted space to play sports. We incorporated sports games into the programme this year through the idea of an Olympic theme. This structure allowed us to host an Opening and Closing Ceremony – to make attendees feel welcome and excited for the programme ahead. This is something that we will continue to implement and adapt at next year's Festival.

### Equality and Diversity

Findings from the Equality and Diversity Monitoring show areas or reach we need to enhance – particularly areas of young people who are from minority ethnic groups and those who identify as LGTBQIA+. We will continue our work with LGBT Youth Scotland, Carers Trust Scotland's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, MECOPP – and other key stakeholders - to ensure our engagement and attendees are representative of all the young carers of Scotland, and continue our commitment to making the Festival a fully inclusive space for all.

### Young carer Voices

Reflecting on the planning of the event the Youth Engagement Officer noted a need for more voices in the planning of the event. In advance of next year's event and planning stages, we look to establish a young persons and young carers services steering group to ensure that young people are involved in the planning of the programme.

Involving the staff from local carer services will improve the experience of planning and the event due to their experience of attending the event and will provide invaluable insight to the planning and execution of the event. Feedback from local carer services staff was that they would like to be involved in decision making and planning for the event. This is so that they are aware of what is happening at the event and to ensure that from their perspective the event is an overall success.

### End of report.