

Issue 36, August 2020



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Back to School and to a 'new normal'!

We can only imagine how difficult these past few months may have been for some of you, however, we at Fife Young Carers have also seen some really positive and heart warming activities take place. That is why this Newsletter is going to concentrate on all the inspiring and uplifting parts of lockdown, as well as the learning opportunities that have come with it.

FREQUENTLY

ASKED

QUESTIONS

I'm anxious about returning to school – what will be done to support my wellbeing?

- It is normal for you to feel anxious or worried and for your parents to have these feelings too. You should feel confident in asking any questions of your school, and your parents or carers should feel confident in doing the same. Remember we have Young Carers Champions in every school in Fife if you need someone to talk to about your caring role. Ask a member of staff who this is in your school.

Will my learning be affected by the changes being put in place? This has been a difficult time for everyone - in particular young people. When you go back to school, your teachers will spend time focusing on helping you, your friends and other pupils feel more settled. This will support your learning. Wellbeing will be a high priority, and this is a very important aspect of the curriculum. Your school might take a phased approach to giving you formal schoolwork. They might ask you for your concerns or questions as part of an effort to ensure that students' priorities are taken account of in the return to schools.

What if there is another outbreak of coronavirus? If there is a local outbreak of the virus which affects your school there will be a discussion between your school, the local authority and local health protection teams, and they will decide what action needs to be taken. They might decide to temporarily close the school. If this happens you will be provided with work to do at home, just like in the 'lockdown' in March/April, with digital classrooms and online learning for a temporary period.

SQA Update: Revised Results and Appeals.

It has since been announced by Education Secretary John Swinney, that all pupils or students who received grades that were downgraded from the original estimate given by teachers or lecturers, will have their grades changed to reflect those estimates.

New certificates will be sent out by the SQA from **7th September** with updated grades to any pupils or students affected.

Where can I get advice and support?

If you want to discuss your next steps, you can speak to someone at Skills Development Scotland. They have a dedicated Results Helpline open Monday - Friday from 9am until 5pm up to 28th August. Call: [0808 100 8000](tel:08081008000)

If you want more information, you can visit the [Frequently Asked Questions section of the SQA website](#).



With the

Young Carers focus group

Carers Week (8th-14th June 2020), was, as you would expect, slightly different for us this year. Rather than the usual networking event we host, we had to adapt and think of alternative ways to achieve our goals.

Luckily for us, we have a fabulous team of Young Carers, the Young Carers Focus Group, on hand to advise us and develop a plan!

Making Caring Visible

Young Carers Takeover!

For our Carers Week finale, our Young Carers Focus Group are manning the helm and taking over our Social Media sites!

Come and ask us questions!

Look out for a very special video we will be sharing on facebook and youtube - sharing our stories to help Make Caring Visible!

Q&A with the Young Carers Focus Group

3-4pm
Twitter: @YoungCarersFocusGroup

Feedback!

We would love to know what you thought of our Carers Week online campaign. If you have watched or read any of our posts in the past week, please let us know what you thought by clicking on the link in this post

Got something you think we should share? message the FYC page on facebook!

Fife Young Carers

Lets get Digital!

As the theme for Carers Week this year was 'Making Caring Visible', it was really important to the Focus Group to honour this in as many ways as possible. During the current difficult times where Carers have limited access to respite and other services, and the potentially drastic affect this can have on them, the group were passionate and committed to achieving this goal through the means of a social media campaign.

Believing that everyone has a part to play in making sure Carers are seen, heard and understood, the group participated in many online activities such as:

- Designing high quality posters with facts, statistics and guides to share on social media and spread awareness.
- Sharing their own personal stories on Social media: 1 for every day of Carers Week.
- Virtual Networking meetings with professionals in Education, Health and Local Authority; giving guidance and advice on how to support Young Carers from within their sectors.
- Young Carers Takeover— for the finale of Carers Week, the group were let loose and manned the helm of FYC social media sites. They introduced themselves as a working group, shared some of their highlights and projects they achieved throughout the years, and carried out a Q&A session; encouraging others to ask them questions.
- 'Our Journey' Video—the group developed and filmed a very moving and impactful video of themselves sharing the experiences of being a Young Carer throughout their life. This is available to watch on our Youtube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oH4DmugpbU&t=8s

The online campaign was a brilliant success. With the posters, story shares and videos on social media, the group were able to reach 7,000 people!

The networking events were also very positive, with feedback from professionals saying how worthwhile it was to take part in and all pledging to support Young Carers in their sector!



A massive thank you from us and the Focus Group to the professionals that took part!

It is estimated that there are as many as 7,000 Young Carers in Fife.

Approximately **1 in 8** of school pupils have a caring role.

Being a young carer can dramatically affect a young person's mental and physical wellbeing.

What can you do to help support Young Carers? ...

Use the R.U.L.E.

Respect
Young carer's in their caring role.

Understand
the young carers struggle.

Listen
To what a young carer has to say.

Encourage
Young carer's to pursue their dreams

Activities

As you can see, our activity page looks a little different than usual. Unfortunately because of lockdown, our residential/group activities we would usually showcase were cancelled. However, we still have lots of news and highlights to share with you from the past few months.

Essential Care Packages

Realizing that lockdown could have a very real harmful affect on our Young Carers and their families, we applied and were successful in gathering funding from Radio Forth's Cash for Kids scheme to buy and deliver essential care packages to Young Carers throughout Fife.

These packs including vital food items such as bread, milk and dry foods, as well as necessary toiletries and cleaning products to keep the house sanitary. The pack also included a small game or 'treat' for the Young Carers themselves.

Feedback from this has been amazing, with many saying how it has helped to decrease their stress and anxiety about food shopping, especially since they are caring for a person at particularly high risk and shielding.

Thank you very much to Radio Forths Cash for Kids for allowing us to do this!



Laptops

Another concerning part of lockdown we realized was the switch and focus on digital resources and learning. Young People were asked to do online learning during this time, however we realised that not everyone would have access to the equipment required to do this.

This can be a major barrier for Young Carers, so we applied for funding to buy Laptops and tablets to give out to our Young Carers.

We are pleased to say we were successful and so far, have managed to get over 30 laptops delivered to Young Carers throughout Fife to help them with their digital learning!

A massive thank you must go to Ryvoan Trust, Clothworkers and the Wellbeing Fund for awarding us this opportunity.

Virtual Groups

Our groups are a major source of support to Young Carers. During lockdown, these were unfortunately cancelled and we realised that this might be a big loss to those Young Carers.

We had to adapt and change our groups to work online, to make sure that we are still giving our Young Carers the support and respite they need during these difficult times.

Although different, we did have some really good sessions:

- Online Drawing Games
- Ceramic Arts & Crafts with Dunfermline Ceramic café
- Online Escape Rooms
- Themed Quizzes
- Treasure Hunts
- Physical Activity Sessions



Coping with Covid

“Lockdown has been an experience to say the least. For me, it flipped my entire reality upside down and made my situation more difficult than usual. Simple things such as going to the shops now filled my cared for person with anxiety and we had some difficulty getting into shops given the one person per household rule. Thankfully, we got everything sorted and managed to slowly adapt to the new normal. I work in a supermarket part time, so that gave me the chance to see any changes that were taking place each week before we went shopping the next. I’m fortunate to be in that position. With the lockdown, it meant that I was in the house with my cared for person near enough all day every day, which caused some tension at times. I didn’t really have anywhere that I could escape to other than my room and I became even more anxious myself with feeling trapped inside. On a positive note, the time we’ve spent together has brought us closer and I realised that I should use this time to find things that interest me so I can have that escape when I need it. I think it has also given me the opportunity to think more, which has been both a good and a bad thing. While sometimes I get trapped in those thoughts of doubt, I also get the chance to just breathe and consider how much control I have over whatever situation is bothering me. I’ve learned the importance of keeping in touch with the people you love. My friends have been a real lifeline for me throughout this whole lockdown, as well as the FYC staff. I would just say to everyone to remind yourself that you’re not alone in all of this. I felt lonely and helpless, but I reached out to others and now I’ve learned to adapt and cope. We’ve all become that bit more resilient. As young carers, we already deal with a lot, so lockdown hasn’t been easy for any of us. But look at us now. Look at yourself and how far you’ve come. We made it through the worst parts. Yes, this virus isn’t going away any time soon, but we’ve learned how to cope and we’re slowly but surely moving on. Things will get better.”—Chloe, YAC.



Case Study:

During lockdown I had 1 young carer (Sarah) who wasn’t engaging in online activities being offered. The first opportunity I got I met with Sarah and went on a socially distanced walk within the local community. During the walk Sarah about things that had been happening at home, her mum had recently split with her partner, Sarah was really upset about this but didn’t feel she was able to share her worries with her mum as this would cause her mum added stress. Sarah bottled up how she was feeling about the split. During the walk Sarah felt able to talk to me about her feelings and we looked at different ways in which Sarah can try to talk to mum about her feelings and explained the importance of being able to be open and honest with mum as it will stop mum worrying about her. Sarah also spoke about playing online games and making friends online so we had a discussion about how Sarah can keep herself safe when talking to people online.

As we were walking back to Sarah’s house she said ***‘this isn’t what I thought it was going to be, I thought we were just going to sit and have a laugh together I didn’t think I would talk about my feelings, I’m glad we did though as I feel so much better about things now, can we do this again’.***—Rebecca, Support Worker.



If you need support with an essential food package or digital resources, please get in contact with your support worker.

Health Information

Adjusting to the 'new normal'

We are finally starting to see things return (slightly) back to how they were before. However, some changes will still need to be in place. We have all done really well so far following the rules, let us continue that and get through this together.



Keep Washing Your hands!

It is still really important to make sure to wash your hands regularly – especially after going to the toilet, after coughing or sneezing, and before eating food. It's also good practice to make sure you don't come too close in contact with anyone who may be carrying an infectious disease, like a cold or flu.

Remember to sing happy birthday twice while you do it!

What phase are we in and what does it mean?

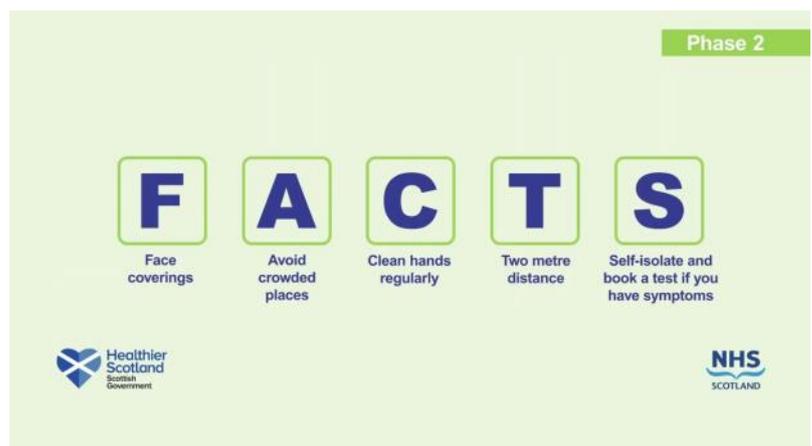
We are in Phase Three of the Scottish Government's road map.

Like in Phase Two, changes will happen over time rather than all at the same time. In this phase, some of the lockdown measures will be eased a little further while others will remain in place. It is important to remember that restrictions are in place to help keep us safe, protect others and save lives, it shouldn't feel like we've returned to normal life yet.

The following restrictions remain unchanged:

- Physical distancing should continue when meeting other households. Children aged 11 and under do not have to distance and the 2m rule may be relaxed to 1m in some businesses (this will be advised when you enter the business);
- Face coverings are mandatory on public transport and in shops and will be mandatory in libraries, museums and places of worship from 8th August;
- If you're under 18 the limit of the number of households you can meet per day (indoors and outdoors) does not apply (but all other rules should be followed, including how many people you meet at one time);
- Working from home should continue wherever possible.

Shielding guidelines paused from 1st August, this means people who've been shielding can follow general public health guidance.



Back Page News!

New Staff!

As you can see, FYC has been very busy recruiting recently, with three new staff joining our wonderful team. We are so excited to have them and know they will be valuable members of the organisation
Welcome to the team Kerri, Lynn & Lindsey!

Kerri Bilsborough, Resource Worker

Kerri joined us right at the start of Lockdown as a Resource Worker. Kerri and Lynn will be responsible for the completion of Young Carers Statements with our Young Carers, as well as training professionals on how to complete these.

“Since 2007 I have worked with children and young people in a range of areas, from youth participation to children's residential worker. I am passionate about children's rights and equality for all. I believe that meeting the needs of young carers while providing the right support creates empowerment, Fife Young Carers is a testament to that. I am truly excited to be a part of the team. I look forward to fulfilling my role as Resource Worker, helping young carers to achieve their goals through 'Young Carer Statements'.



Lynn Morgan-Hill, Resource Worker

Lynn also joined us at the start of Lockdown as a Resource Worker. Along with Kerri, Lynn will be responsible for supporting Young Carers through the provision of Young Carers Statements.

“For the last 3 years I have been delivering workshops to school children promoting good emotional wellbeing and the things we can do to maintain our mental health. I also previously worked as a Volunteer Group Support Worker for a local charity then became their Development Worker. I am really excited to be a part of Fife Young Carers and look forward to making a positive difference to the lives of Fife's Young Carers.”

Lindsey MacRae, Team Leader

Lindsey recently joined us as Team Leader of our Support Services where she will be managing and assisting our Support Workers to improve outcomes for Young Carers.

“I have worked in various different roles throughout my career, working with children and young peoples services for over 20 years including youth work, education, social work and residential settings. During this time I have seen the difference that organisations like FYC can make in young peoples lives and the positive impacts this has. I am looking forward to being part of the team at FYC and meeting all the Young Carers.”



If you would like anymore information or have any questions about the content of this news-letter, please contact Amber Reid, Fife Young Carers Development Worker on 01592 786717 or email amber@fifyoungcarers.co.uk