

<i>item:</i>	6
<i>report:</i>	CYP52/08

YOUNG CARERS STRATEGY

by Innis Mitchell and Frances Nixseaman

Summary

This report introduces the second strategy to support young carers in Highland.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the second strategy to support young carers throughout Highland and reflects the main developments that have occurred since the first strategy was written in 2005. It is intended to cover the period of For Highland's Child 3.
- 1.2 The draft strategy is provided as a separate paper to this meeting of the Committee, and it is intended that it will be available at www.forhighlandsyongcarers.co.uk
- 1.3 Young carers and those who work with children and families were consulted and the strategy has been developed around their responses.
- 1.4 The Strategy is therefore presented for formal approval of all the improvement objectives and associated actions, as set out in a separate report to this Committee regarding the format and timetable of the new Children's Plan.

2. Background: before the first Young Carers Strategy

- 2.1 There are two dedicated young carers' projects, based in Portree and Golspie that have been operating for a number of years. The Young Carers East Sutherland (TYKES) was established in Sutherland in 1999 and now operates in East Sutherland. The Skye & Lochalsh Young Carers Project developed from the work of the local Community Care Forum and was set up as project in 2000.
- 2.2 The type of work the projects do includes advice and support, whole family work, advocacy when this is required and the provision of respite for young carers. Constructive groupwork, creative work through the arts, health promotion and counselling are also typical components of this type of project.

- 2.3 These projects have significantly raised awareness of young carers' issues across Highland.
- 2.4 In 2002, the Highland Carers Project received funding to develop a strategic overview of policy and practice affecting young carers in Highland and bridge the geographical gap that existed in services for young carers by providing information and training to professionals to support young carers in universal services.
- 2.5 These three projects continue to consult regularly with young carers, develop partnerships with other agencies, highlight current issues for young carers and provide advice for professionals who work with children and families.
- 2.6 Smaller pockets of work had been developed before 2005 in Alness and West Inverness. Part time young carer workers were funded from social inclusion partnerships and one continues to be based in West Inverness.
- 2.7 The Birnie Centre also provides a monthly activity group for siblings of children with special needs.

3. Developments since 2005

- 3.1 Young carers groups are now also being run by Children Service Workers in Invergordon Academy and Thurso High. TYKES and Highland Carers Project continue to manage a sessional worker to support the group in Invergordon Academy.
- 3.2 Every secondary school in Highland has a young carer contact.
- 3.3 South West Ross Community Care Forum have just recently begun to identify and support young carers in Plockton and Gairloch.
- 3.4 Wick Family Centre has recently recruited a young carers support worker and intends to run weekly young carers groups in Caithness.
- 3.5 Highland Carers Project were successful in gaining independent funding to recruit a Young Carers Education Officer for 1 year to talk to children and young people in schools in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey about young carers.
- 3.6 Crossroads in Lochaber have received additional funding to provide respite for siblings of disabled children.
- 3.7 Awareness and understanding of young carers issues and needs has increased significantly across Highland
- 3.8 There are examples throughout Highland of health professionals, social work staff, youth workers and voluntary organisations providing a high

level of support to individual young carers but this varies greatly between individuals, services and areas.

4. Young Carers as a Policy Priority

4.1 The Concordat between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities includes a commitment to “work together to discuss and agree implementation and resource issues relating to these policy areas.....providing respite and other support for an additional 1,000 young carers”

4.2 In Highland, this would be equivalent to an additional 40 young carers.

5. About the Strategy

5.1 From consultation with young carers and partners, in addition to policy, legislation, research and current practice, it became apparent that the main aims of a strategy should be to

- enhance universal support to enable early intervention and an integrated service for families
- reduce the number of inappropriate caring roles taken on by young carers, and
- facilitate the development of specialist provision to support those young carers who would benefit from this type of support.

5.2 The improvement objectives to deliver these aims focus on

- information for professionals and young carers
- training for professionals and young carers
- identifying young carers
- young carers' assessments
- respite
- family support
- one to one support for young carers
- young carers' peer support

5.3 In order to implement this strategy it is proposed that a For Highlands Children 3 strategy group be developed to include representation from the young carer projects as well as from other agencies such as health, education, social work and police.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 An initial screening Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted on the strategy.

- 6.2 There are no concerns that the strategy will have an adverse impact on any particular group regarding race. However, a review will be carried out of provision of information in languages in addition to English.
- 6.3 The strategy will not have an adverse impact regarding gender. Although one concern is that two of the young carer groups that have developed in schools which are entirely girls. Work is being done to encourage male young carers to feel included in any young carer support networks that develop.
- 6.4 There are no concerns regarding disability. Young carers who have additional support needs should be able to attend any young carer activities but for young carer groups with limited capacity they may need to bring a support worker.
- 6.5 For socially excluded groups there needs to be ways of ensuring that young carer information reaches those children and young people who may not access information available through universal services.

7. **Recommendation**

- 7.1 The committee are asked to endorse the Young Carers Strategy for 2008-2011.

Innis Mitchell
Children's Planning Manager
Project

Frances Nixseaman
Highland Carers