



# WATCH OUT THE WALL!

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Feedback from the Care  
Commission's Young Persons  
Forum, March 2005

# OFF THE WALL

## HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?



From the Editor

### WELCOME...

This magazine is all about young peoples' experiences of using care services and their ideas about how their quality of care can be improved.

So how do we know what they think? Well, it's simple – we asked them! And they were certainly not shy in giving their ideas on how we can improve their lives. The big problem is that they feel that no one listens to them!

Last month, the Care Commission and Who Cares? Scotland invited young people from across Scotland to come together for a day to discuss their experiences and have some fun with a number of creative activities.

The old adage that 'children should be seen and not heard' was totally turned on its head by the Who Cares? Scotland team who encouraged the young people to discuss issues and express their experiences through video, song, drama, art and graffiti.

The results were impressive and this magazine will give you a taste of what young people think about their quality of care and where improvements could be made.

But nothing will ever happen if no one listens to them! So enjoy the read – you just might learn something and help make a difference!



**Sarah Wilkie**  
Care Commission  
Editor

**SUSAN McKAY**, one of the young people who attended the Care Commission's forum in March, gives her impressions of the day:

Saturday's event was made up of workshops covering different issues that young people experience in the care system.

The workshops included arts & crafts, drama, music, graffiti arts, video and puppets and a newsletter. Each group had an issue to discuss but most people in the end focused on confidentiality, stigma, having a voice, making their own decisions, dignity, complaints and staff members. These are important issues to young people and they felt they needed to be voiced.

Each group had a different category to work on and conversation was encouraged through group participation and brainstorming. The feedback from the young people working in the groups was very successful and positive. But they also indicated the negative side of care which needs to be improved.

The workshops were fascinating as everyone shared the same opinion more or

less about most issues. It was easier to discuss issues within the groups especially for those attending for the first time.

I had an understanding of how the event would unfold as I have experience of Who Cares? Scotland events. I always look forward to these events as it's particularly interesting to hear young people's views and opinions on how the care system is run. Events like these should happen more often as it's a way to involve young people in the decision process of care. On the whole, the outcome of the event was very positive.

## WHO IS THE CARE COMMISSION?



Kenny Stewart

**OUR** overall goal is to improve the quality of care throughout Scotland.

We were set up in 2002 after the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 to regulate care services based on the National Care

Standards. These standards focus on the quality of care people can expect to receive when they use a care service.

### What we do

- ★ Make sure that all care services are registered with us
- ★ Inspect each service twice a year
- ★ Talk to care managers, staff and people using care services during inspections

★ Make sure that all care services meet the National Care Standards and take action if they don't

★ Work with care services to improve the quality of care they provide

### How to complain

★ A large part of our work is to investigate complaints

★ You can make a complaint about a care service, as can carers and staff

★ We also deal with complaints about the Care Commission

★ All complaints are dealt with sensitively and thoroughly

If you have a complaint, or would like to find out more about the Care Commission please call us on 0845 603 0890 or visit our website at [www.carecommission.com](http://www.carecommission.com)

"Give us more information on what's happening"

# WATCH OUT GIRLS ALOUD, WATCH OUT SUGABABES!



**NOT** many pop stars could go into a recording studio with people they have never met before and write and record a song in less than two hours. Well this is exactly what eight young women did at the music workshop to illustrate how feeling safe plays a critical part in their life.

Anne Marie from Paisley explained: "We all discussed the issue of safety and what it meant to us and from the comments we wrote down we were able to put them together as lyrics for a song. It was amazing how simply it all came together really."

Once they agreed the lyrics Peter, from Who

Cares? Scotland, came up with a tune on his guitar. Then it was time for a quick rehearsal before they gave their debut performance at the end of the day.



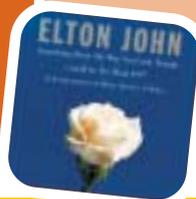
## "It's feeling at Home"

It's when you're not alone  
It's when your safe in your home  
It's not having to worry about who's there  
It's not having to share (a room!)

Feeling safe is important  
It's not feeling alone  
Feeling safe and secure  
It's feeling at home  
When you've got someone to turn to  
It stops you feeling blue

## DID YOU KNOW...

The all-time best-selling single in the UK is Elton John's "Candle In The Wind '97". The song sold 4.86 million copies in the UK and a further 37 million around the world.



# LIFE'S NOT A PERFORMANCE

**DRAMA** was one of the most over subscribed workshops at the event so it shows that

young people are not shy when they get a chance to take to the stage. Which was just as well – as the workshop was all about realising your potential.

After a 'get to know you' session the youngsters got down to discussing their experiences of realising potential – and everyone agreed that the big problem was that care staff do not listen, or do not have the time to listen to their views.

## Here's what they had to say:

- ★ "They (carers) are always too busy and we feel that they are not really listening to us."
- ★ "We're not kids we need to be treated as normal – people should not judge us differently just because we are in care."

The group agreed that carers need to make more one-to-one time

to talk to young people and to be more sensitive and understanding to their needs. This was the basis of their play which was recorded for posterity!



## DID YOU KNOW...

The **Academy Awards®**, affectionately known as the **Oscars®**, are the world's most famous film awards. The awards and gold-plated statuettes have been presented annually since 1929.

Last year's winners include

- ★ Jamie Foxx – Best Actor **Oscar®** for **Ray (2004)**
- ★ Hilary Swank – Best Actress **Oscar®** for **Million Dollar Baby (2004)**

"The music workshop is brilliant"



# OFF THE WALL



## GRAFFITI ISN'T ALWAYS VANDALISM!

A YOUNG person with a spray can could be considered by most people to be a menace to society. The Scottish Executive has launched an 'anti-social behaviour' Act to stop people using graffiti, littering and generally making a nuisance of themselves.

However, graffiti has been used throughout history as a way of expressing ideas and thoughts from cavemen to the street artists of New York! It was in this context that young people were encouraged to express themselves through graffiti art.

Graffiti 'guru' Steve, with his shaven head and waxed goatee, has worked across Europe teaching graffiti art and has been commissioned by many organisations to brighten up their buildings.

"Graffiti is seen as an anti-social phenomenon but if properly positioned and used in the right context it can be adapted to provide a positive message," said Steve. "When used in this way it can provide a powerful approach that adults can understand."

The young people discussed how they feel when they get respect and how they feel when they don't – then Steve designed their own 'tags' – a graphic illustration of their names to use on the wall.

Steve was impressed with the young peoples' enthusiasm and the way they were quickly able use the graffiti wall to express their thoughts about respect, dignity and exercising their rights.



**BEX** from Ardrossan was a natural and decorated the wall with slogans and artwork. "It's really good to meet people who are in the same situation as you and there is a good atmosphere of trust here," she said. "I love art as a way of expressing myself and graffiti is a great way to use both words and drawing. It is a great thrill and boost to work on such a large scale with the graffiti wall," she added.



## ART ATTACK!

**EVEN** famous artists hesitate when confronted with a blank canvas. But when you've got a 20ft by 8ft banner to create a masterpiece then it's no wonder that some people scratch their heads wondering where to start – especially when the finished result is going on show to the

public at the Care Commission's headquarters in Dundee. Tempted by the felt, wool, paints and stickers, the youngsters got over their initial hesitation and started to 'attack' the canvas with colours and artistic creations. Once they got used to the idea they were

encouraged to create artwork that would represent some of the relationships they have with their families and carers. A felt goldfish with sparkly scales represented a pet, a mobile phone was a treasured personal possession, an unhappy face represented the situation that some people find themselves in when using care services... and bright blue blobs on an orange background because... well, it just looks great!

As the budding artists covered the banner with their individual creations they started to discuss as a group what they felt about privacy and confidentiality.

Susan from Dundee was the group's spokesperson, and while her creative input into the banner was beautifully abstract her comments on privacy were elegantly precise. "Our group had issues with privacy and confidentiality like sharing rooms, being allowed to talk on the telephone with no one listening and all sorts of things that we feel are inappropriate age-related sanctions," she said.

Forms and access to information were also issues. "A 16-year-old might not have a problem



"Encourage us to talk about things and let us get involved."

## DID YOU KNOW...

The word 'graffiti' derives from the Greek word 'graphein' meaning to write. Some of the earliest graffiti was found on ancient Roman architecture but the idea of painting on walls was something even the cavemen did.

But modern graffiti in its present form of colourful, expressive pictures has its roots in the hip-hop street culture of the United States.

The craze of spray-painting New York subway trains in the 60s and 70s has spawned a whole generation of new exciting graffiti artists.



# THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT!

**A BUNCH** of budding 'Spielbergs' got behind – and in front of – the camera and really 'socked' it to the group on Saturday with their short films about life in and outside their care environments.

Scenes of police harassment, bullying and unnecessary harsh treatment by carers were enacted on screen with the help of puppets that the young people made out of old socks! And they included scenes that would not be out of place in soaps like Coronation Street, EastEnders and River City.

The young people looked at equality and diversity, which in the end came down to lifestyle and choices. The group discussed the way they are treated both outside and inside their care environment and developed scripts to help show what this was like in real life.

Like other workshops, one of the main issues was how outsiders treat young people differently just because they are in care. There were tales of the police victimising young people in care, trying to resist peer group pressure to follow the crowd and get into trouble and what young people felt was unfair behaviour from carers on what they could and could not do – like owning a mobile phone that was paid for by the young person's savings.

When the video was shown to all the young people at the end of the day there was great applause and laughter because everyone could recognise similar situations in their lives.

Sara Jane – one of the filmmakers and 'sock' actors gave the day a big thumbs up!



## Make your own!



1. Scrunch up a ball of newspaper to make the head and cut a 'collar' out of cardboard.

2. Put the ball of paper in the end of the sock then place the cardboard collar inside as the neck. Sellotape around the neck on the outside of the sock to make the head.



3. Cut two holes in the sock for your fingers to act as the puppets 'arms'

Then decorate the head with eyes, a mouth and a nose...and it's alive!



Banner - now displayed in Dundee HQ filling out a form but how is a 10-year old going to cope? We need condensed forms appropriate for all ages – and they should have open questions not leading ones.

"And who gets to see these forms? It's our own personal information and we should know who gets to see it."

## DID YOU KNOW...

An anonymous buyer bid \$104,168,000 at Sotheby's in New York for Picasso's 'Garçon à la Pipe' - making it the most expensive painting in the world!

"It's been a lot of fun"

# OFF THE WALL

## VOXPOP VIEWS

**THERE** is nothing that newspapers like doing better than a 'vox pop' – asking people in the street what they feel about a certain issue.

So we asked the group: "Who feels that young people can be honest about revealing their real feelings to adults in a review or panel situation?"

Two thirds of the young people in the workshop believed they could not – and this was a shock to everyone.

So the group asked what could be done to change this?

Steven Paterson, Assistant Director of Who Cares? Scotland agreed this was a problem and why it was important for organisations like his to speak up for young people.

Ray Mclean, a young persons worker for South Lanarkshire & West Lothian suggested that young people could be involved in the training of panel members so they could see things from a young person's view.

"What about them visiting units so they can see where they're sending a young person before they make a decision on that person's future?" said Ray. "It would keep a focus on what the young person wants as well as their needs."



## HOLD THE FRONT PAGE!

**INSTEAD** of grown-ups hogging the headlines the young people attending the Dundee event turned the tables by taking full editorial control in the newsletter workshop to write about issues they felt were important to them.

The young newshounds were looking at how young people participate and make choices in their care... and they relished the opportunity to grill senior members of the Care Commission and Who Cares? Scotland as well as social workers!

If you want to grab someone's attention then you've got to have a great headline. So Melissa, a 15-year-old from Glasgow, summed the whole

thing up with her article: "How would you like it if a stranger decorated your home?"

Melissa highlighted the lack of input young people have in decorating their own homes. "Everything is chosen by members of staff – what about a meeting each year held by young people to discuss issues like this?"

Well, what about food as well? Julie from Edinburgh wrote that often the staff and chef get the wrong food. "Why not have a menu of what we don't like and what we do like – keep this in our files so the chef knows," wrote Julie. "I'd even like to help cook it!" she added.

## STANDARDS THAT WE CAN UNDERSTAND

**ALTHOUGH** Michelle & Kevin thought the event was a good way of finding out more about the Care Commission and the National Care Standards they took on the role of ever critical journalists!

They told Jacquie Roberts, Chief Executive of the Care Commission, that many young people found the standards hard to understand.

She acknowledged this and told the group that another

forum was being organised on the following Monday for people who work in care services to look at the feedback coming out of today's event – and this would include Rhona Brankin, Deputy Minister for Health & Community Care, who works with people who set the standards.

Jacquie said: "If a very strong message is coming from the young people today for the

standards to be written in a simpler and more accessible way that is a very powerful message to be passed on."

She then promised to have a word in the Minister's ear.

**So did the Minister listen? Turn to page eight to find out!**

Dundee was a fitting venue for the newsletter workshop as the city was famed for its dominance in the three 'Js': jute, jam and journalism. DC Thomson has been publishing newspapers and magazines since 1905 and its current portfolio includes The Sunday Post, The Courier, Dundee's Evening Telegraph - as well as the Beano and the Dandy!



"Don't judge on first appearances"



# FEEDBACK FOR THE PROFESSIONALS

**“IT’S my life!”** was the big shout out from the Dundee Hilton posse!

The feedback from Saturday’s workshop was presented to more than 100 care professionals who attended the Care Commission Forum: Focus on Young People on 7 March. They included representatives from local authorities, voluntary organisations, and individual care homes.

The feedback showed that young people living in care in Scotland feel they are not treated with respect, not just from their carers but from society as a whole.

Young people who use care services do not see themselves as different from any other person. Although they appreciated the need for support, most felt that just being taken seriously would improve their quality of life. Other issues raised by the young people included their request to have more say in their own environment and, above all, to be listened to.

These experiences bore out the results of the Care Commission’s own “Review of the Quality of Care Homes in Scotland”, published last year, which examined life in Scotland’s care homes.

Jacquie Roberts, Chief Executive of the Care Commission said: “For the first time, we have the findings of a national review of care quality, plus the comments of young people themselves. This is a very valuable body of knowledge that challenges all the professionals and practitioners to raise their game and find ways of sharing best practice for the benefit of young people.”

“In that context, I believe this Forum will be a milestone on the road to improving care for children and young people in Scotland’s care homes.”

## WHO IS ‘WHO CARES? SCOTLAND’

**THIS** is an independent organisation who works with young people in care services to improve their standard of life.

They also ensure young people are aware of what their rights are and also work towards improving the poor image of young people with experience of care.

Who Cares? Scotland works locally and nationally with most Scottish local authorities to:

- ★ Give individual advocacy and support to young people
- ★ Listen to young people’s views
- ★ Campaign for change
- ★ Help policy makers to consider young people’s views
- ★ Bring together young people with experience of care.

## RESULTS OF THE CARE COMMISSION REVIEW

**THE** Care Commission carried out a review of the quality of care homes across Scotland in 2004 looking at care homes for older people as well as children and young people in care homes.

The review covered 158 care homes for children and young people and looked at how these services matched up to the requirements of the National Care Standards for this sector. The Care Commission also held focus groups with 22 young people in these care services conducted by independent experts from the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care and Who Cares? Scotland.

### This is what the Care Commission found:

- ★ In the most recent inspection visits, 35% of the 158 care homes for children and young people, failed to meet at least one regulation.

- ★ 20% were required to improve record keeping
- ★ 14% to improve facilities
- ★ 12% to promote and manage better systems for dealing with complaints and grievances
- ★ 9% to improve the young people’s welfare

### RESULTS OF THE FOCUS GROUP

**The focus group revealed that young people had:**

- ★ Experienced good support
- ★ Positive attitudes from staff
- ★ Improved living environments
- ★ Been offered more opportunities

However, two-thirds of the sample of young people who participated in focus groups told us that they were unhappy with some aspect of their care.

Almost half of them believed they were not treated with respect either some or all of the time.

One common theme was that either there was not enough staff or they did not have enough time for the young people they work with, and young people themselves highlighted better staff training as a particular need.

Trust and privacy were also important issues for these young people, as many of them did not feel safe all of the time, with several not feeling safe at any time. Threats to safety came from other young people, sometimes their families, and very occasionally from staff.

Contact with families was clearly very important, and often felt to be limited or inadequate.

Many young people felt that their views were not taken seriously, and consistently questioned just how well the complaints procedure works.

**“We’re not kids - we need to be treated as normal”**

# OFF THE WALL

## HERE'S WHAT WE THINK!



### STEVEN'S SUM-UP

"IT never ceases to amaze me that the talent and creativity of young people often belies their educational attainment," said Steven Paterson, Assistant Director of Who Cares? Scotland.

"This feedback shows us that if we are going to provide them with the highest level of care possible we need to listen to them. We need to keep them safe, treat them with dignity and respect and help them with their life choices.

"Unfortunately some of the issues raised here by our young people are becoming uncomfortably familiar: the need for more safety, the attitude of staff and the quality of care they received and more privacy in their life.

"We need to do more to listen to young people and we need more action around what they are telling us," he added.

**STEVEN** Paterson, Assistant Director of Who Cares? Scotland, presented the feedback from the young persons' forum to the care professionals gathered at the conference on the following Monday.

"Saturday was a voyage of discovery for us," said Steven who said he was blown away by the commitment and creativity the young people showed and the passion they had to tell the organisers what they felt about being in care services.

However, there was a surprise in store: out of 49 young people, 23 had not heard about the National Care Standards!

At a lunchtime poll the young people were asked if they felt their care providers gave them their rights under the National Care Standards (see table).

When asked about their feelings regarding the following statements there was almost unanimous agreement with them.

| Do you enjoy:                       | Yes | Sometimes | No          |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----------|-------------|
| Choice                              | 19  | 4         | 8           |
| Respect                             | 10  | 8         | 6           |
| Being treated equally by staff      | 7   | 1         | 24 <b>X</b> |
| Being supported to fulfil potential | 11  | 6         | 13 <b>X</b> |
| Respect for your confidentiality    | 6   | 3         | 18 <b>X</b> |
| Complaints are taken seriously      | 12  | 1         | 23 <b>X</b> |

- ★ **"Need more space in life to think"**
- ★ **"It is not a good feeling when you are let down"**
- ★ **"Choice of social worker is vital"**
- ★ **"Should not judge young people by first appearances"**
- ★ **"There are too many restrictions in Children's Units"**
- ★ **"I feel I get encouragement"**

However, some people felt that it was important to have some restrictions or fair boundaries that young people have to understand.

"At the end of the day this feedback verifies the findings of the Care Commission review into young people using care services," said Steven. "It shows that there have been some improvements but there is still much to do in the areas of safety, respect, support and development and generally taking young peoples' views seriously."



### WHO SAID POLITICIANS DON'T LISTEN?

**THE** young persons' workshop highlighted the fact that some young people did not know about the National Care Standards or if they did many of them found them hard to understand.

Care Commission Chief Executive, Jacquie Roberts was concerned about this and was able to feedback this

situation to Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care Rhona Brankin MSP before the Monday seminar with the care professionals.

The Minister recognised that there was a clear need to involve young people in any review of the relevant National Care Standards. In the meantime she has asked the

Care Commission and the Scottish Executive to think about how a better understanding of the Standards can be achieved in the short term.

The Minister was impressed with the young people's event organised by the Care Commission with the help of Who Cares? Scotland, and said: "What is particularly important is that the Care Commission is listening carefully to what is being said and building it into its practices. That can only be to the benefit of the people who need to be cared for."

Photo: Scottish Executive

"People should not judge us differently just because we are in care."