



Who Cares? Scotland Annual Report 1998

Hi it's David here, just a quick word to welcome you to this years Annual Report. This year so much has happened that we don't have enough space to go into it all in detail!

We've got a brief review of the past year, giving details of the increase in advocacy work, the increase in members and training programmes that Who Cares? Scotland have been providing. There are also some details about the inputs to events by Who Cares? and a summary of all the publications that we've produced this year. Finally we'll have a look to the future to the events that will be taking place in the next year and how Who Cares? will strongly continue to work for our young people in care.

Also before I go I would like to thank everyone involved with Who Cares? for the help and support I have received in my time as Chairperson. However this year I have decided that it is time to move on and give someone else a chance to take Who Cares? further forward. Once again thanks very much and good luck for the future.

*David Macormack
Chairperson*

Another busy year. More activity with young people. More involvement with residential workers and managers. Lots done and achieved! We also managed to celebrate our birthday.

We now have more workers than ever, covering most of Scotland. They have been involved in representing young peoples interests, both individually and in groups. Young people have also been active in all sorts of events.

There have been many highlights during the year. My own include: the national meetings, the presentations by young people at Conferences looking at safety in care, the work on mental health, each outstanding issue of the Speak Out magazine, and the birthday football match on a cold Sunday afternoon.

We still have many challenges ahead. The most important involve making sure that we get increased funding to improve our work on behalf of young people and to support the Information and Training Project. And we still need to tackle those councils that have not agreed the allowances we are campaigning for.

Sadly, there has been so much activity this year, some of the traditional events have been squeezed out - most notably the Annual Conference. Never mind - we still have it to look forward to!

"SPEAKING OUT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE"

*Bill Alexander
Staff Consultant*



Advocacy



We published our advocacy leaflet this year, and while some young people were already using this service, we were surprised by the amount of requests from young people for the Young Persons Workers to advocate on their behalf.

This is a service which we recognise as being very important to young people and we hope to develop this area of work in the future, hopefully with the introduction of new workers who will focus on advocacy.

Training

This year we have started developing training courses, for young people and workers, as well as offering training to staff from other organisations...

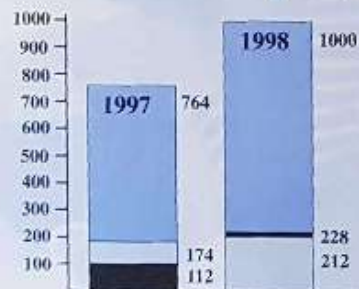
...(at a price of course!).

We completed our first training course for young people who are involved with Who Cares?, this involved communication skills, groupwork, running a workshop, making a presentation and organising/running events. All of the young people who completed the course felt that the course was useful for them and have received certificates and pen sets.

We have also developed a training course for staff who work with young people who have had experience of care. The course entitled, Moving On... working with young people with experience of care, was delivered to staff from John Clark House - a homeless unit in Inverness. This course covered: the work of Who Cares? Scotland, working effectively with young people, issues for young people leaving care and policy and reality. Over the next year we hope to deliver this course to other staff involved in this area of work to continue to raise their awareness of the issues, we also hope to develop another course looking at working with young people who are still in care.

We have also taken all of the staff away to Perth for two days to carry out team building training. The course went really well and helped everyone to get to know each other a bit better, so that we can work together effectively to provide the best service possible.

Membership Update



The membership drive is coming along very nicely, it has continued to grow throughout the year. You can see on the graph opposite where the increase has come from to give us a membership drive of 1440.

■ In care
 ■ Left care
 ■ Supportive adults

Who Cares? Scotland would like to thank those who finance us, in particular we gratefully acknowledge financial support from Save the Children Fund, Scottish Office, Scottish Local Authorities, National Lottery Charities Board and other voluntary organisations. There is more information available on the financial situation of Who Cares? (this can be obtained from the National Office).

For any information on specific pieces of work for local areas you can contact your local young persons worker, who will be more than happy to help.



Through the Post Office voluntary award scheme, Who Cares? Scotland were awarded £5000. Thanks to this award we were able to provide a much needed under 12's information pack which contains: A charter of rights tape, a leaflet to go along with the tape, a booklet explaining everything Who Cares? does for young people, a membership card, a pencil and a ruler. The pack was launched at the under 12's fun day in July 1998 and was distributed by TJ & Mel, who feature on the information materials in the pack. The pack is designed in such a way that under 12's will understand and enjoy reading it.



The Feeling Safe? report was produced in September by Who Cares? Scotland. It presents the views, comments and recommendations of young people in relation to feeling safe. The report can be studied as a whole or can be looked at for individual sections. It covers a number of safety issues that are of paramount importance to young people and highlights recommendations for local authorities not only to think about but actually put into practice. The report which has been dedicated to the victims of abuse in care was launched at the Safety Conference held in September 1998.

Mental Health Report

This report was produced by our Mental Health Project Worker in April 1998. It was the result of research and consultation with "looked after" young people. A conference was held where professionals and young people came together, and visits were made to young people in various establishments. The report describes young people's first hand experience of mental health issues. During the research process, the mental health worker found out how a young person's mental health and welfare can best be supported and maximised by the system they live in and what changes need to be made in order for this to happen. The report also highlights recommendations which have been put forward as a result of the findings from the Listen Up! conference in October 1997 and also from listening to young people on the mental health issues that really matter to them.



If you haven't got a copy of the above reports then you should buy one now. Both cost £10.50 and you can get them from the National Office.

Pocket Money Campaign



The pocket money campaign was the result of a national meeting held in Stirling. During this campaign, young people from the Board of Directors wrote to all local authorities, asking them to accept or agree with their proposals, to introduce a fair rate of pocket money. Not all local authorities responded, so we produced a poster reminding everyone of what we were asking for. The posters were distributed to all residential units and social work departments and meetings were held to argue the case, with the result that most local authorities now agree with the Who Cares? recommendations.

Thanks to the following people who have been involved with the Board of Directors throughout the last year: Bill Alexander, Becky Colley, Alison Davies, Anne Drummond, Sandy Jamieson, Gary Marnie, Charly Mathers, David Macormack, Nicky McIlroy, Iain McLaren, Robin McLean, Anne Marie O'Hanlon, Sandra Paterson, Andy Pattie, Sandra Samson, Vicky Smith, Gordon Travis & Ronnie Latham.

Inputs to Events & Conferences

This has been a very busy year for Who Cares? Scotland. We've been out and about giving presentations or being a part of conferences and seminars. We've drawn up a list (of just a few of them) to let you see who we've been working with:

National Conferences & Events

- BAAF - Education for young people in care
- BAAF - Health Issues for young people in care
- NFCA - Foster Care Conference
- CRCC - Throughcare Conference
- CRCC - Safety Conference
- COSLA & BASW - Safety Conference

Local

- SACR Newsletter - Effectively consulting with young people
- Registration & Inspection Advisory Committees - (various Local Authorities)
- Childrens Services Plans - (various Local Authorities)

Training Inputs

- John Clark House - working with young people with experience of care
- Who Cares? Scotland - training for young people
- South Lanark Throughcare Forum - (various inputs)
- John Wheatly College - Preparing for Independence
- Children's Panel - Training for Panel members - (various Local Authorities)



It's always good to look back and see what we've done successfully, but the work doesn't stop there.

Who Cares? has grown so much and become so well known that we're always getting asked to do more and more. This is great - so long as it helps put forward the views of young people, and make a real difference to where they're living and the kind of care they get. In the past year, we've taken on new areas and tried out new ways of working. Projects in residential schools, more work on advocacy, involvement with the Edinburgh Inquiry, task forces on Throughcare and Safety in care. And all of this on top of what we already did! The coming year looks like being even busier as we'll be trying to do even more in the residential schools, with young people in foster care and on moving on from care.

I'm sure we can do it, and do it well. The only real worry (as always!) is funding. We need to get every council to give us enough money to do the job properly in their area. We need to get enough funding from other sources to keep the national office running. We need to find money to replace the Lottery funding to keep up the high quality of the 'Speak Out' magazine. And if we want to do anything new.....yes, we need to find the cash!

We've had some support this year from other organisations, but what we really need is for 1999 to be a big year for fundraising. It will be our 21st Birthday and we could really use 21 big donations - Any offers???



Who Cares? Scotland, National Office, Block 4 Unit C3, Templeton Business Centre, 62 Templeton Street, Glasgow G40 1DA

Tel: 0141 554 4452 Fax: 0141 550 3834

e-mail: who.cares.scotland@zetnet.co.uk

Web Site: <http://www.who-cares.org/>