



COMMUNITIES THAT CARE RENFREWSHIRE

STAKEHOLDER EVALUATION SURVEY REPORT

January 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

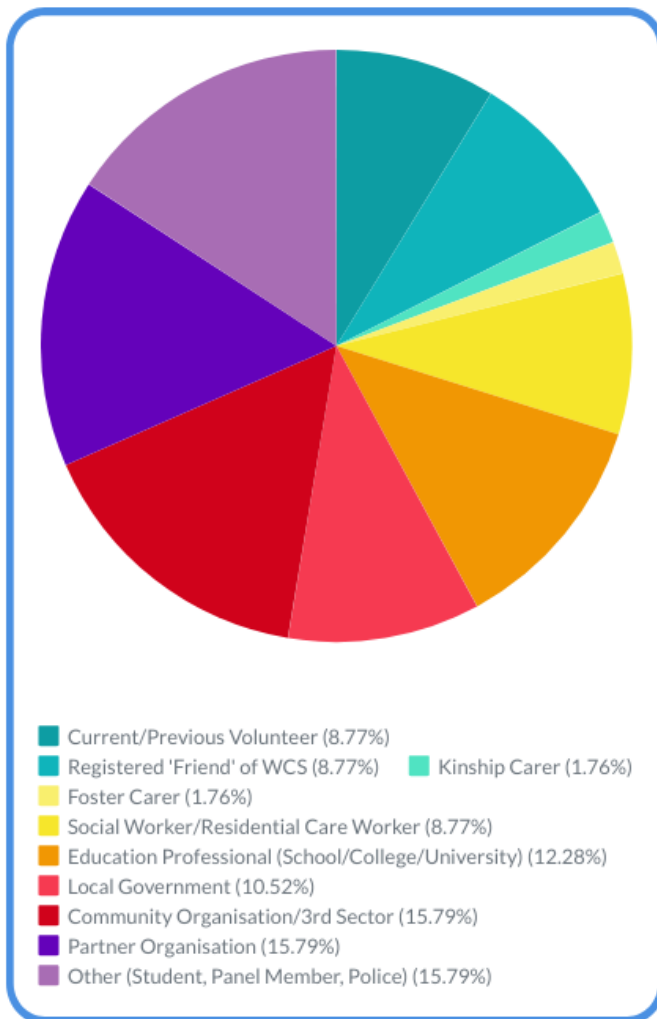
Over the past 5 years, thanks to funding from the STV Children's Appeal, Who Cares? Scotland has been working across Renfrewshire to deliver local opportunities for young people growing up in care and care leavers, and to deliver targeted community education to raise awareness and understanding of care experience. We have called this work the 'Communities That Care' Project.

Approaching the end of year 5, the project has undertaken a series of both broad and in-depth research with key stakeholders to understand the impact of our work and future priorities. This report focuses on results of an on-line survey sent out via email to ascertain views of a broad section of workers, carers and supporters across Renfrewshire. Views were sought on stakeholder interactions with the project, personal and professional learning, and project impact on them/their work, for Care Experienced people and for their community.

Throughout November 2020, 43 responses were received from key care sector professionals and corporate parents, carers, previous event attendees, volunteers, and registered Friends of Who Cares? Scotland in Renfrewshire, all who had interacted with the project during the 5 years, either personally or via the young people they support.

Stakeholders gave extremely positive responses about what they had learned from their interaction with the project - both in terms of increasing their knowledge about the lives of Care Experienced people and the impact this has had on their work. They also reflected very positively on the work of Who Cares? Scotland in their community, with 85% looking for the project to continue after this 5 year funding period.

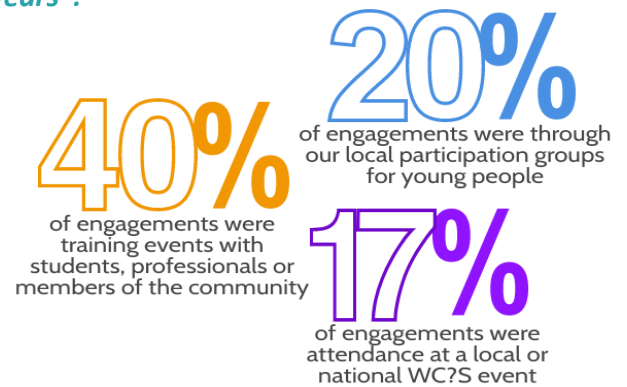
2. RESPONDENTS



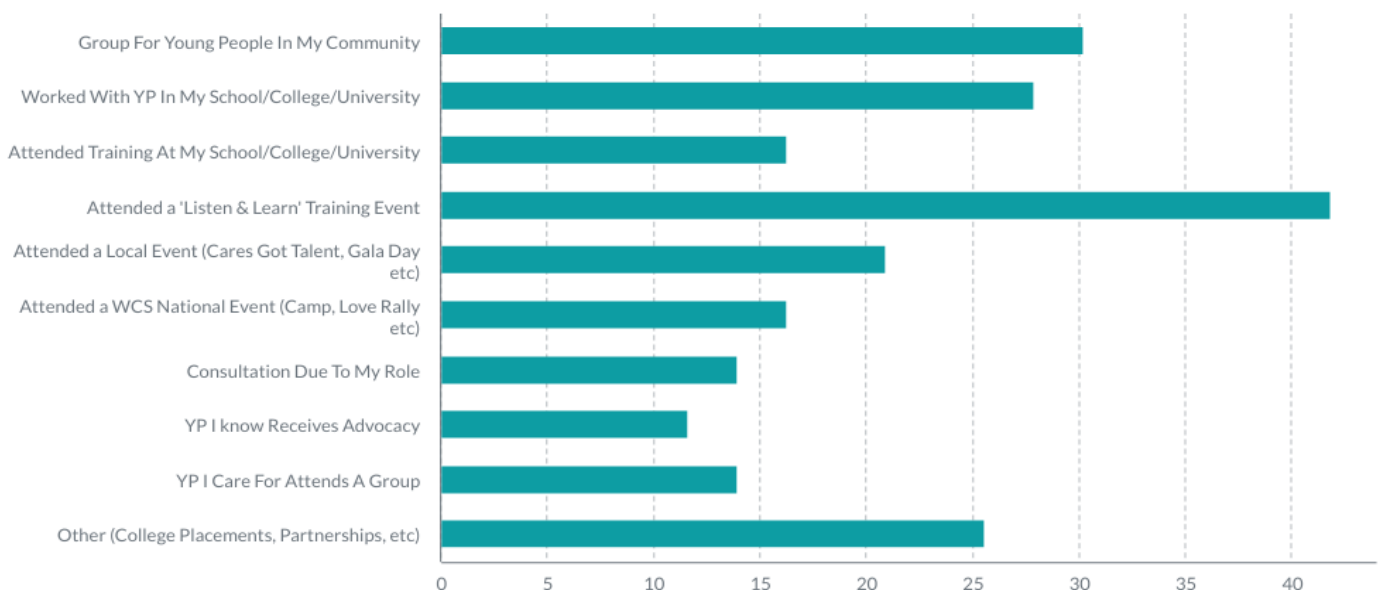
“In what capacity do you know Who Cares? Scotland in Renfrewshire?”

Respondents could select more than one answer, as some interact with the project in several different ways. The 43 responses were representative in that they were received from across a broad range of stakeholders that the project has worked with during the 5 years: from carers, social workers and care staff involved on a daily basis with care experienced young people, through to volunteers, community organisations, and Corporate Parents such as local government, education, Children’s Panel and the Police.

“How have you been involved over the last 5 years”:



Again, respondents could select more than one answer:



3. STAKEHOLDER LEARNING

Respondents were asked what they had learned through involvement with the project. 40 respondents chose to answer, expressing positive views on either:

- Their learning about the lives of Care Experienced people and support needed.
- Their learning about the Communities That Care project itself.

Key comments included:

Greater awareness of the care system:

- “More understanding of the care system, different types of care and I have also gained deeper understanding of the affect that the system can have on young people and how important Love is in people’s lives.”
- “About the 1000 voices campaign and importance of putting love into the care system.”
- “The term care experienced, and advocacy.”

Understanding the challenges faced by Care Experienced people:

- “Learned more about the challenges facing Care Experienced young people especially when leaving care and seeking job opportunities.”
- “A greater understanding of the needs and support offered to young people who are Care Experienced.”
- “I’ve learned about the challenges and adversity faced by Care Experienced people but more importantly learned ways to help, encourage and support them.”
- “Resilience of young people in care.”

Consideration of how to better support Care Experienced people:

- “Ensure we are using the right vocabulary, that we are supporting young people in the right way and showing they belong.”
- “About my role as a corporate parent and impact of support I give to young people.”
- “in particular I have learned about the support needs for Care Experienced students.”
- “That I am the best Foster Carer I can be, that I put the needs of those I care for above the wishes of Social Work.”
- “The value in encouraging the potential of young people.”
- “Many skills such as participation, child protection, youth community work.”
- “The importance of supporting young people in the community.”
- “As a result of attending a Listen & Learn event I became a volunteer in my local area.”

Learning about Who Cares? Scotland’s work:

- “About the support and guidance Who Cares Scotland gives to young people drawn to their service, including building their skills and confidence in participation, and influencing systems and services.”
- “Really important group for Care Experienced young people in Johnstone, inspiring policy change.”
- “Caring thoughtful staff. Making a big difference to the lives of young people.”
- “They do work with a lot of young people and really impact the community.”
- “Who Cares includes the views of Care Experienced people throughout their work.”
- “The importance of participation, advocacy and giving young people a voice.”

4. PROJECT IMPACT

Respondents were extremely positive when asked to rank the work of Who Cares? Scotland in the following areas:

	Not Successful	Partly Successful	Very Successful
Communities understand care better and have more positive attitudes towards Care Experienced people.	2%	21%	77%
Care Experienced people have more opportunities to come together for fun, shared identity, and to use their voice.	0%	14%	86%
The project created opportunities to influence change for Care Experienced people.	2%	14%	84%

Respondents were then asked for their feedback on the impact of the project's work, to which 41 out of 43 chose to reply on the impact for:

- Professionals
- Care Experienced children, young people and adults
- The wider community.

Impact On The Work Of Professionals:

Key highlights included:

Professionals working within the care system:

- "It made me more aware of young person's views in the Hearing system."
- "Assisted my role by allowing me access to lived experience and to hear and respond to the voices of Care Experienced people."
- "It gave me the confidence to advocate for the child in my care."
- "It has given me a clear picture of what our young people need both practically and emotionally."
- "Partnership working with Who Cares? in my community has meant early intervention for families."

Professionals working in Training and Education:

- "The education of employers in realising added challenges being faced by Care Experienced young people."
- "The project has provided challenging and positive placement experiences for our students."
- "Allowed me to focus on the needs of Care Experienced students, encouraged me to work more closely with Care Experienced groups in the University."
- "I work in a secondary school, this has equipped me to be more aware of issues young people may be facing and to provide support to them."
- "Having Who Cares working with all classes P5-7 in our school has been invaluable for my own understanding and knowing the support our families can access."

Other Professionals who have interactions with Care Experienced people:

- “How to make youth groups accessible and desirable to Care Experienced people.”
- “I gained more skills and experience through this project and I feel I make a difference in young people's lives.”
- “I feel that I have become less judgmental of others as I have that understanding of how things that happen to people as a child impact them in later life.”
- “The project has impacted our work so much that we started a national project for Care Experienced young people to get involved with.”
- “Has encouraged and developed inter-generational relations and learning experiences”
- “I heard young people talk about the impact of volunteers spending time with them and wanted to be that person, now I am.”
- “Local connections and relationships, shared learning, mutual respect.”
- “Given me more empathy and understanding.”

Impact On Care Experienced Children, Young People And Adults:

As well as the 11 people who chose simply to write that the project had “A positive impact”, other key comments were:

Belonging:

- “I've seen young people grow and trust because of the project.”
- “Children met other young people in the community who are Care Experienced, and they now have a voice.”
- “I feel that it has given the young people, and even sometimes their families a sense belonging, provides them a safe place for them to be themselves and be with people who are like them.”
- “They all love the Who Cares staff and in my experience feel genuinely supported, encouraged and loved thanks to the work that they do and the time they take to build relationships with them.”
- “It positively impacts on loneliness and a sense of isolation.”
- “I am now proud to speak out and say I am Care Experienced.”
- “They feel listened to, empowered and cared for.”

Participation:

- “Several young people had opportunities for work experience, training and employment, and participating in events and training which has increased their self-confidence.”
- “Many have had the opportunity to attend clubs and events in their local area and have had access to arts and crafts and support that would not have been developed if the project had not taken place.”
- “They have a free space to express themselves, learn new skills and meet new people.”
- “Built their confidence and developed their skillset. Promoted ambition and developed a self-supporting community.”

Influencing:

- “Allowed them to experience new opportunities and to facilitate and drive change.”
- “Young people are more involved in the co-production and co-design of the service.”
- “It has amplified their voices and given them a much-needed platform.”
- “It has given young people the confidence to have more say in how the care they receive and how it should be delivered.”
- “Incredible - sense of purpose, connection, fighting for change.”

Impact On The Local Community:

6 respondents chose to say that the project “had raised awareness”. Other highlights were:

Group Work:

- “The Wee Diamonds project is a very popular and important group within our community. Bringing children and families together.”
- “Young people have somewhere to go outwith the statutory sector.”
- “The projects have given the young people an activity to focus on which spreads out to the local community.”
- “It has helped remove stigma surrounding Care Experience. Young people have found common ground with peers they didn’t know they had through shared clubs & groups.”
- “Empowering young people. Improving self-confidence and self-esteem.”
- “Improved young peoples’ chances in life.”

Training & Education Work:

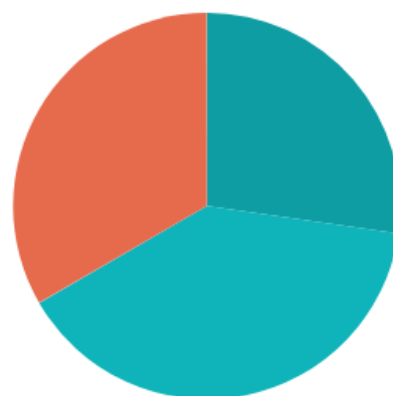
- “Care Experienced students now have visibility and a voice in the University, we also now have a named support contact.”
- “The project has delivered extremely informative sessions to our student group and extended their understanding of the experiences and needs of young people who are Care Experienced.”
- “Social education programmes have increased the awareness and understanding of what it means to be Care Experienced among school pupils.”

Community Understanding & Engagement:

- “I feel that Renfrewshire is somewhere that Care Experienced people can flourish and I think that is due to the amazing work the Renfrewshire Who Cares? Scotland team do.”
- “It has forced people to recognise this amazing group of young people and to listen to their voices.”
- “It has educated communities and school kids about the realities of Care Experience, helping to change negative attitudes and stereotypes associated with being in care.”
- “A great impact on the community as it creates free spaces with many activities where everyone can get involved and feel valued.”
- “People can now see Care Experienced people as those we should support and include fully in society.”
- “Reducing stigma around Care Experienced young people and creating awareness of issues such as mental health, suicide and poverty.”
- “It makes the community a better place for Care Experienced young people to be in.”

38 respondents replied to the question: ***How might things have been different for young people, the community, or your work if the project had not been here in Renfrewshire?***

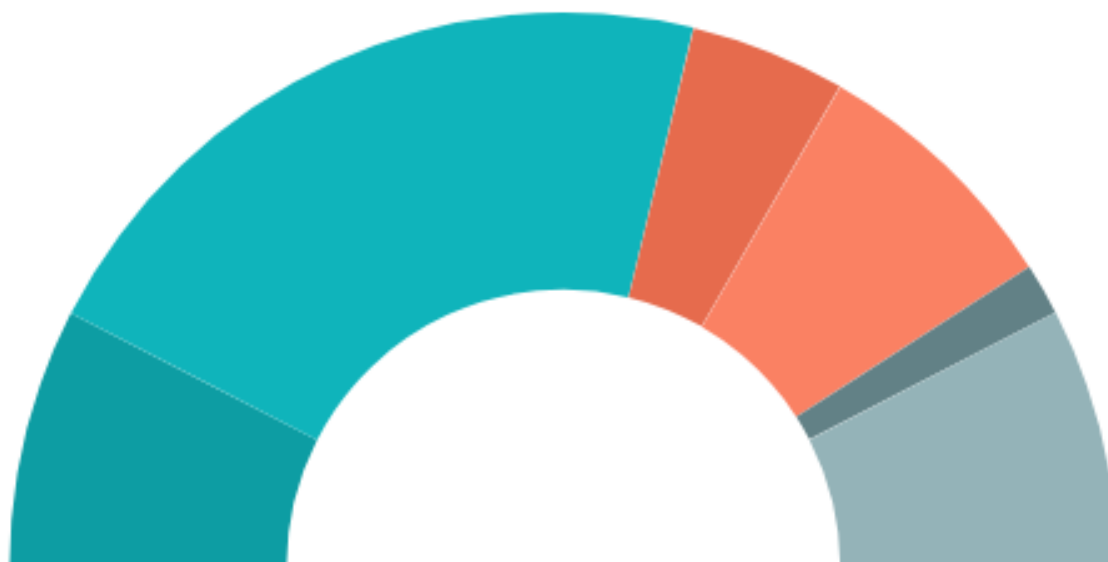
In summary, their responses were:



- There would be less awareness and understanding (27.27%)
- There would be less support for Care Experienced people (39.39%)
- Care Experienced people would not have gained skills and confidence (33.33%)

5. CHANGES & IMPROVEMENTS

When asked what could have been better about the project, only 33 respondents chose to answer, with comments all falling in the following areas:



- Sustainability and future funding to continue the work (15.15%)
- Nothing - keep project going as you are (42.42%)
- More work in Schools (9.09%)
- Extend reach within Renfrewshire and other parts of Scotland (15.15%)
- More opportunities to exchange information between professionals (3.03%)
- Not sure (15.15%)

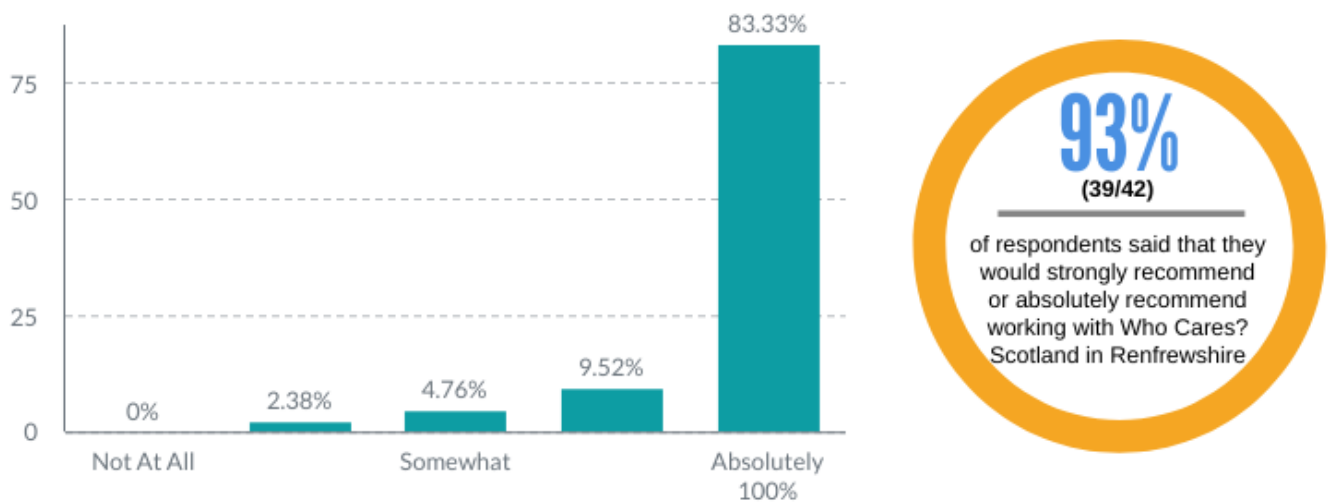
Surprisingly, there were no suggested improvements to the way the project had worked.

85%

of responses (i.e. all responses other than those who said “not sure”), were overwhelmingly requesting a continuation or extension of the work already carried out by the Communities That Care project.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS

Respondents were asked if they would recommend working with Who Cares? Scotland in Renfrewshire. Responses were extremely positive.



Survey participants were finally asked if they had any further comments about the project and its impact: 23 respondents chose to comment.

5

People just wanted to say
"Keep Up The Great Work"

7

People wanted to say "Thank You"
to particular members of staff and
volunteers whose work had made
a difference to them

Other comments were:

- This has led to some changes in practice and funding for employability, cultural activities and holiday experiences for young people. It has also helped ensure that they have a forum where their views are heard.
- I now encourage young people to find out about the project and get involved with it.
- Who Cares do an amazing job for our young people
- The project is a lifeline for a lot of people
- The workers and volunteers are amazing
- I feel that the level of support Who Cares Scotland provides for our young people is crucial to how they thrive in the care system
- What a fabulous project, so glad I came to your event and now I'm at WCS as a result
- Great organisation, professional staff making a difference.

7. CONCLUSION

Feedback from stakeholders via this survey will form part of the wider project Stakeholder Evaluation, firstly so that we are able to report back to funders, and secondly so that Who Cares? Scotland continues to move forward at all times with the needs of Renfrewshire's young people, and the communities who support them, at the forefront of our actions.

When conducting a survey of this nature it is common to find a degree of sample bias, as those who were more engaged with and impacted by the project are often more likely to respond. However, this survey was anonymised, and communicated in such a way that it deliberately invited honest responses from a wide range of professionals and community members. Of those invited to participate, some had only a small interaction with the project (such as attending one 2 hours training event over the 5 years, or had signed up as a supporter and only received email updates) and some did have greater involvement. However, none of the key stakeholders with whom the project holds the most in-depth relationships were sent this survey, as they were all invited to participate in this Stakeholder Engagement work in other ways (e.g. 1-2-1 interviews and focus groups.)

Therefore, the strength of the overwhelmingly positive responses to this survey is welcomed, but also a little surprising, as a more varied response might be expected. The conclusion we can draw from this is that it demonstrates the impact of, and the value placed upon, the work undertaken by the Communities That Care project. More importantly, it highlights the need for this work to continue.

Most notably, when asked how things would be different if this work had not taken place in Renfrewshire, 100% of the responses responded favourably towards the project: 40% of respondents said without it there would have been less support for Care Experienced people, 33% said without it, Care Experienced people would not have gained skills and confidence, and 27% said there would have been less awareness and understanding.

What matters now is that Care Experienced children, young people and adults - whether on the 'edges' of care, in care, or having formally 'left' the care system - are still able to access the supports that the professionals around them are telling us they do not receive from any other source. Secondly, that the wider community in which they live, go to school, work, and participate as a member of society is informed enough via education, training and other engagement to understand their place in ending stigma and denial of rights, in order to positively influence the lives of people with Care Experience.

Our work in Renfrewshire has made a difference, but it is not done.

The hundreds of Care Experienced young people in care, who have left care, and who will be in care in the future, deserve more.