Employability Report

caring for young carers in east ayrshire
Executive Summary

This report aimed to address gaps in provision of services for young carers that are often overlooked in government policies. The aim was to assist twenty young carers, over the course of a year, into a positive destination, particularly employment.

Young carers were given intensive support from an employability project worker to develop employability skills. This was done through a variety of training methods, and the provision of any support identified by young carers as being necessary to assist them into a positive destination.

Evaluation was carried out by young carers completing questionnaires at the start and end of their participation in the project. This measured how their soft skills had developed. Hard outcomes of the project were measured by counting the positive destinations young carers entered.

On the whole young people joined the project seeking employment and as time progressed many started looking at other options as it became clear that finding employment was not a straightforward option. By the end of the project three young carers had entered employment, seven went to college, eight went into training, one returned to school and one had still not reached a positive destination.

The report concludes that young carers should receive individually focused support and mentoring from a professional that understands their situation. Young carers should be involved at all stages of the process and training should be flexible to suit their needs. It is also the role of any employability worker to ensure service delivery is joined up and that relationships are established with local employers.
# The East Ayrshire Carers Centre: Employability Report

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Workforce Plus: An Employability Framework for Scotland states that:

“employability encompasses all the things that enable people to increase their chances of getting a job, staying in and progressing further in work. For each individual, there will be different reasons why they are not achieving what they would like in employment, perhaps their confidence and motivation, their skills, their health or where they live compared to where the jobs are available” (2008, p4).

An issue often overlooked, but intrinsically linked to many of the above reasons is being a young carer. It is recognised among those working with young carers that many have above average disadvantage in gaining training, employment or further education. Many do not attend school regularly or leave school with few (if any) qualifications. Disadvantages of caring for family members, who may have a multitude of problems, can lead to low self-esteem, and little or no aspirations associated with gaining employment.

The overall aim of the Employability Pilot Project was to address gaps in provision of services for young carers in Scotland. Through work with the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance and surveys carried out at the Scottish Young Carers Festival a gap was identified by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers in support and services provided to young adult carers moving into employment, further education or training.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers is the largest provider of carers support services in the United Kingdom and within Scotland alone, through a network of twenty nine carers centres, and the Scottish Young Carers Service Alliance, provides quality information, advice and support to approximately three thousand three hundred young carers.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers identifies a young carer as “a child or young person under the age of eighteen carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another person, which would normally be taken by an adult” (http://www.carers.org/who-is-a-carer,118,gp.html).

East Ayrshire Carers Centre is one of the twenty nine independently managed Carers Centres which provides information, advice, support, training, leisure and social activities to carers of all ages living in East Ayrshire. The Centre currently supports approximately five thousand adult carers and six hundred young carers via four venues in Kilmarnock, Cumnock and Dalmellington, as well as providing outreach services throughout East Ayrshire. The Centre also operates three social enterprise initiatives the primary aims of which are to enable young carers to access training, further education and or employment.

As a local authority East Ayrshire is largely rural with many of the towns and villages suffering from multiple deprivations. Many of the young carers supported by East Ayrshire Carers Centre support a family environment of substance misuse, mental health problems, financial problems, social deprivation and third generation unemployment. This background often leads to low self-worth and frustration. In response East Ayrshire Carers Centre has worked with a wide portfolio of funders delivering a number of innovative projects that have had significant impacts on young carers.

Alpha Venture Employability Centre is one example of a service East Ayrshire Carers Centre has delivered to young carers aged 14 – 19. Based in Dalmellington House, Alpha Venture Employability Centre is funded through Inspiring Scotland and aims to assist one thousand young carers into
Based in Dalmellington House, Alpha Venture Employability Centre is funded through Inspiring Scotland and aims to assist one thousand young carers into employment over a ten year period.

The Centre provides young carers with real life work experience in the hospitality industry within Dalmellington House, a five bedroom townhouse which is funded through Inspiring Scotland. The Pamper Bus, donated by Stagecoach, is another initiative that acts as a vehicle to deliver vocational training to young carers to enable them to access employment in the beauty and hospitality industry. The bus provides complementary therapies such as Reiki, aromatherapy, Indian head massage, beauty therapies, pedicures and manicures, free of charge to carers in rural areas throughout East Ayrshire.

In the Employability Pilot Project, over a period of one year, twenty young carers received intensive support after being referred onto the programme via young carer’s workers. The aim was to support these young carers into a positive destination such as employment, education or training. Other benefits to the young carers that participated would be improvements in soft skills such as confidence, willingness to take on responsibility, and the ability to develop relationships.

After referral (see Appendix 1 for referral forms), the young carers met with the Employability Project Worker where they were registered (see Appendix 2 for registration forms), and participated in a personal development interview from which a personal development plan was devised. A copy of a Personal Development Plan can be found in Appendix 3. A training plan was then developed (see Appendix 6), along with the young carer which, included a range of activities from literacy and numeracy support to work placements. Young carers then received complete, step by step support in their search for a positive destination.

This piece of research illustrates how East Ayrshire Carers Centre used additional funding to help young carers gain access to employment, education or training. It represents only a small proportion of the provision, which exists throughout local authorities and individual schools and carer’s centres but may help paint a picture of what can work when supporting this challenging group.

Also within the process of carrying out the project and ultimately achieving the outcome of twenty young carers moving into a positive destination, literature focusing on More Choices, More Chances (NEET, Not In Employment Education or Training) as well as different policies and reports that tackled employability issues associated with young carers were studied.

Tackling the NEET problem is identified throughout a range of Scottish Executive policies. The issue is prevalent in publications from a variety of governmental departments, appearing in economic strategies, social justice and social inclusion.
strategies and education / lifelong learning policies. The majority of these policies however, focus on employment strategies as opposed to the removal of barriers to employment such as assisting with employability skills.

In Scotland, for example, the focus has shifted from the seven “Closing the Opportunity Gap” areas to following the “Workforce Plus” approach which has involved strategies such as: “mapping and understanding the current range of employability services, their role and focus and their performance; assessing the extent to which local supply chains for those seeking work are complete and taking action to strengthen these chains; agreeing and implementing an action plan which creates a more coherent and complete local employability service; aligning current resources – funding and staffing – to achieve this employability service” (http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/policyoverview.aspx).

In More Choices, More Chances: a Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland (2006) the government published a headline figure of “thirty five thousand” young people in Scotland that fell into the NEET category. Within this group approximately fifteen thousand were considered to be in a transitional phase of NEET which would end in a positive outcome, for example, a gap year before going to university. The remaining twenty thousand young people, between the ages of sixteen to nineteen, were the focus of the More Choices, More Chances strategy. In December 2010 Skills Development Scotland published the figure of eight hundred and ten young people falling into the More Choices, More Chances category within East Ayrshire.

The More Choices, More Chances report also identified the sub-groups of young people that were most likely to be or to become NEET. This included “care leavers, carers, young offenders, young parents, low attainers, persistent truants, young people with physical/mental disabilities; young people misusing drugs or alcohol” (p.1). This clearly points to young carers as being among the hardest to help young people who require the most intensive and appropriate support to access and sustain opportunities in the labour market.

**Workforce Plus: An Employability Framework for Scotland (2008)** also describes how:

“lone parents and others with caring responsibilities remain one of the largest groups who are workless and want to work. They often face a combination of low skills, lack of work experience, poorer health and inflexibility in the hours available for them to work, as well as practical difficulties in making alternative caring arrangements” (p.45).

The Pamper Bus, donated by Stagecoach, is another initiative that acts as a vehicle to deliver vocational training to young carers to enable them to access employment in the beauty and hospitality industry.
In *Young Adult Carers in the UK: Experiences, needs and services for carers aged 16 – 24 (2008)*, Saul Becker highlighted that, for: “young adult carers in transition, especially those caring for a parent with severe mental health or substance misuse problems, some may not have the advice or guidance from within the family to help them navigate through this period of change in their lives at the same time as they continue with their caring responsibilities” (p.5).

These statements highlight the need for professionals working with young carers to have the ability to provide assistance and guidance in all aspects of employability skills.

*Skills for Scotland; A Lifelong Skills Strategy (2007)*, although not specifically naming young carers, is relevant to the work of this project as it emphasises the importance of promoting “equality of opportunity to those trapped by persistent disadvantage” (p.5). The report gives a clear commitment to young people regarding the routes available to access and sustain education employment and training and the support they can expect. It also recognises the need to focus on young people who are at risk of entering a negative destination as well as detailing the issue of young people possessing key employability skills. This is confirmed in the report as it states employer’s desire people with softer skills including “effective time management, planning and organising, effective oral and written communication skills...the ability to solve problems” (p.8).

These are skills we would expect to be developed in school, college the home or the community but are areas young carers may need additional support with as they may have struggled to participate due to their caring responsibilities.

In the past other policies such as *A Smart Successful Scotland (SSS) (2001), Closing the Opportunity Gap (CtOG) (2002) and Social Justice: A Scotland Where Everyone Matters (1999)* have all emphasised the importance of including marginalised groups in employment strategies, as well as, “doing more to reduce the number of young people not in work, education or training” (SSS, 2001, p.15).

*Closing the Opportunity Gap (2002)*, included a target of “reducing the proportion of 16-19 year olds not in education, training and employment by 2006” (p.18).

*Social Justice; A Scotland Where Everyone Matters (1999)*, included as a milestone “halving the proportion of sixteen – nineteen year olds that are not in employment, education or training”. (p.11).

In overview, few policies attempt to address the actual barriers to education, employment or training for those that are at risk of becoming NEET, particularly young carers.

However, the *Beattie Report (2005)* advocated the introduction of a Careers Scotland Key Worker Service that would allow young people in transitional stages “access to a key worker to guide and support [them] through the network of other agencies and/or a mentor to offer informal support and encouragement to help build self esteem and confidence” (The Beattie Report, 2005, p. 214). That model of support and encouragement formed the basis for this pilot project, in which young carers received intensive support, encouragement and advice in all aspects of employability and job searching.
Section 2: The Process

Referral

East Ayrshire Carers Centre runs Young Carers Groups throughout East Ayrshire for Young Carers aged 8 - 21. The majority of Young Carers attend groups regularly and build a trusting relationship with their respective young carers’ worker as they participate in activities that are targeted at their age group; and are provided with the opportunity to mix with their peers and relax in a supportive environment.

It is a key part of the young carers’ workers role to spend time establishing a relationship with young carers and therefore developing knowledge and understanding of a young carers’ situation within the home and at school. Workers also have close links with school staff (often a main source of referrals), social work and careers advisors. This allows workers the capacity to signpost young carers to appropriate services within their area.

In the process of this project young carers workers identified twenty young carers over the course of one year as already falling into the More Choices, More Chances category, or as having the potential to do so. This was possible through the combination of workers weekly contact with young carers and having the ability to discuss any issues with them, as well as having close links with schools and careers advisors.

Young Carers Workers were provided with an outline of the Employability Project and a description of the criteria a young carer would have to meet to be eligible. Any young carer referred would have to be at least sixteen and currently not in education, employment or training or have the potential not to be within the three months after their referral.

Young Carers Workers received referral forms (see Appendix 1), so that upon identifying a young carer that required additional support to access a positive destination it was possible to refer them immediately. This was always done with the full consent of the young carer.

Referral forms asked for information on the young carers’ current position regarding employment, education or training; a brief description of their caring role; the reason for their referral onto the project and, if known, their future plans or aspirations. This information provided the basis for discussion at registration.

As soon as the project worker received a referral form, a meeting was arranged with the young carer to register them. This meeting always took place in a location suitable for the young carer i.e. in their home, in their nearest carers centre or at a young carers group. It was not expected that a young carer would have to travel to meet up with the project worker.

Registration

Upon receiving a referral for a young carer the project worker would arrange a time as soon as possible, to meet up and carry out the registration process. As the project worker did not necessarily know the young carer the meeting was generally arranged over the phone and included an introduction to themselves by the project worker and some further information on the project. It would also be explained to the young carer information they were required to bring with them to the meeting. This included (if available), exam result certificates, details of previous work experience, national insurance number and details of any other workers they were in contact with, such as careers or job centre advisors. It was then arranged to meet with the young carer at a time and a location suitable for them. If the meeting wasn’t for a few days the project worker would call the young carer the day before to remind them of the meeting and confirm the time and location.

The registration process involved filling in a registration form (see Appendix 2), which asked for personal details, academic information such as exam results, and previous work experience. Filling in the...
registration form allowed the project worker to make a basic assessment of literacy and numeracy levels and identify how ready for work the young carer was. Any blank areas or low levels of attainment allowed the worker to easily identify training needs and future supports.

The young carer was completely involved in the registration process as this ensured any responses being planned best met the needs of the young carer and that they were agreeable to all plans. As this stage the young carer was also asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix 4) giving their permission for their story to be used as a case study (anonymously) and also completed a questionnaire (see appendix 5) which would give a baseline indicator of their soft skills.

**Personal Development Plan**

During the registration meeting young carers would also complete a Personal Development Plan (see Appendix 3). This looked at the journey it was hoped a young carer would make during their time on the Employability Project. Written on an arrow to illustrate the young carer moving forward towards their goal or vision, discussion would take place surrounding the young carer’s current employment situation, and how they felt about their situation at that time.

Secondly who could help would be discussed. This usually included the employability worker, young carer’s workers, careers or job centre advisors, teachers or previous teachers, previous employers, friends or family members. It was vital to include anyone that could give a reference or be a source of potential job vacancies or other positive destination.

Strengths that the young carer felt they had were also added to the arrow. This could have been any strength ranging from a caring and helpful attitude to having two years previous work experience in a local shop at weekends.

Following on from discussing these areas next steps were then developed in which the young carer would perhaps agree to develop a CV, discuss the possibility of employment with a family friend, look for jobs in local newspapers or shop windows or go on a computing course to update their skills.

Opportunities and challenges that could arise from the next steps were then added, often issues such as the ability to travel certain distances or the amount of time a job would take them away from home and their caring role were identified as issues.

Finally the vision for the future was added. This included short and long term goals such as getting a job, moving into a house of their own, passing their driving test or getting a car or going to college or university.

Together with the information from the registration form a training plan (see Appendix 6) was then produced which formed the basis for the young carers development.

**Methods of training**

Once fully registered young carers took part in a variety of training sessions that were identified as being suitable for their particular needs. These may have been picked up from their registration form, PDP or identified by the young carer themselves. All were aimed at equipping the young carer to fulfil their employability potential and not all young carers took part in every training opportunity. Types of training ranged from practical skills, personal skills, employability skills and the development of practical job search skills.
Practical skills training

Essential skills

Referrals were made to East Ayrshire Council Essential Skills service for young carers that required additional support with numeracy and literacy. This gave the young carer the opportunity to receive one to one (or in appropriate circumstances) group support, to work on problem areas such as reading, writing or numeracy. Once a referral was made to Essential Skills one of their workers would contact the young carer and arrange sessions in a local building that the young carer would be able to access whenever required, normally on a weekly basis.

Food Hygiene

Young carers that showed an interest in the catering industry were put through their Elementary Food Hygiene Certificate. This was a one day course based in Dalmellington House which gave individuals a basic knowledge and understanding of the causes of food poisoning, measures for prevention and the legal aspects of food hygiene in Scotland. This is an invaluable qualification when searching for employment within the catering industry as many employers specifically ask for potential employees to hold it as a minimum qualification.

Young people and money

Young carers (particularly those with their own tenancy) participated in a Young People and Money course which was run by either the Project Worker (who had undertaken training to deliver the course) or by the Money Advice Worker who worked within East Ayrshire Carers Centre. The course gave young people advice and information on all aspects of financial management and was aimed at empowering them by improving their financial awareness and capability.

ASDAN Employability Award

Where possible young carers undertook the ASDAN Employability Qualification. This allowed them to develop employability skills and acquire transferable skills that would help them progress in their journey towards a positive destination. Most of the learning was activity based with the young carers working independently, with some support if required.

First Aid

Some of the young carers took part in one or three day first aid courses which had been organised by East Ayrshire Carers Centre or East Ayrshire Council. The First Aid course is another qualification that is valuable, particularly when compiling a CV that may lack work experience or academic qualifications.
**Personal development training**

Where required young carers also participated in a variety of different courses all aimed at developing personal, soft skills and abilities. These included courses such as presentation skills, customer service, assertiveness and confidence building. These were all run by qualified trainers within East Ayrshire Carers Centre and were open to all young carers. However, young carers that had identified issues in these areas were particularly involved, with the aim being the courses would assist in removing personal barriers to positive destinations.

**Employability skills**

Young carers also received one to one or where appropriate group support to develop employability skills. A range of websites were utilised to develop information and activity packs that covered CV’s, covering letters, job search, application forms, interview skills, and all other aspects of employment. A list of the websites used can be found in the bibliography. These resources were combined with the project workers own training materials and worked through along with the project worker, using worksheets, games and simulation to develop and enhance the skills and confidence of young carers in these areas.

**Sourcing Employment/ Education/Training**

A variety of means were utilised in searching for positive destinations.

**College/University Prospectus**

The project worker contacted all college and universities in the West of Scotland to request a prospectus. This then created a library within Dalmellington House that allowed young carers or the project worker to instantly research courses that were available.

**Newspapers**

Local and national newspapers were bought weekly along with recruitment papers such as Scottish Recruitment and displayed within Dalmellington House so they were readily available for young carers to job search whenever they were in the centre. It also gave the project worker the opportunity to search for potential suitable vacancies for young carers and contact them regarding these.

**Job Search Websites**

Young carers were given the opportunity whenever they met with the project worker to search job websites. The project worker also did this daily and printed any vacancies that may have been suitable to display in Dalmellington House, and also to contact the young carer that they may have been relevant to.

**Catalogue of training providers**

Skills Development Scotland’s online resources were utilised to search for appropriate training providers for local programmes such as Vocational Get Ready for Work Programmes, Lifeskills or Modern Apprenticeships. Young carers then went to their career advisor to be referred onto a programme.

**Links with careers advisors and school staff**

The project worker continued to maintain and further develop links with careers and school staff in a bid to develop a joined up approach to working with young carers. This meant work was not being duplicated and would remain valid to the young carer. It also kept the project worker informed regarding initiatives and opportunities that may be of future relevance.

**Links with local business**

It was important for the project worker to develop effective links with local businesses, particularly the main employers such as nursing homes, garages, shops and factories. This allowed the project worker to organise workplace visits for young carers which gave them a sample of duties involved in a company they may have a chance of being employed within. These visits also allowed young carers to ask questions about what employers would look for and expect when recruiting. It also kept the project worker in the loop if any
vacancies were likely to be arising while building a working relationship with people responsible for recruitment.

To establish links with local businesses was a time consuming but worthwhile task. Phone books and internet searches were utilised to find companies that young carers indicated an interest in. It was also advantageous that the project worker lived locally so was aware of local companies and the services they offered.

Once the project worker and young carer had identified companies the project worker then spent time making phone calls or knocking on doors introducing themselves and the project. Most businesses required as much information as possible about the carers centre, the project and the expectations of the project if they were willing to take someone on placement. It was vital to stress that there would be no cost to the employer.

The majority of businesses that agreed to take a young carer on work experience did so after meeting the project worker on at least two occasions. This was usually on their own premises and it allowed them to gather as much information as they required. It also gave the project worker the opportunity to carry out risk assessments or to arrange for them to be done by an outside agency.

The main thing employers needed assurances of was that taking a young carer on a work experience placement or opening their workplace for a visit would be of no cost to them. They were assured throughout the process that if they agreed to take anyone then all equipment they needed would be provided by the project. This meant purchasing items such as chef’s whites and working boots for young carers before they started work experience. It was also made clear that risk assessments would be carried out by the project at a time suitable to the employer.

In a few instances employers stated that they were willing to take young carers but upon meeting them it became apparent they did not possess Employers Liability Insurance. This was usually the case if someone was self-employed and worked alone, in which case they usually only had Public Liability Insurance. Under these circumstances the project worker had to discuss whether the employer would be willing to change their insurance policies to cover the young carer. In most cases they decided it wouldn’t be worthwhile for the short amount of time they would have someone on placement.

A few employers requested additional information about young carers. They felt they weren’t fully aware of issues that could affect the young people they were taking into their business and were keen to find out more so they could provide as much support as possible. In this case the project worker provided information packs that could be distributed among all staff and

“Where required young carers also participated in a variety of different courses all aimed at developing personal, soft skills and abilities.”
where necessary arranged to have a meeting with staff to discuss their thoughts and answer any questions. The project worker also gave out business cards so that contact could always be made should issues arise with anyone during their placement.

On a weekly basis the project worker contacted employers if they had anyone on placement to check how they were getting on. This also gave the employer the opportunity to suggest further training that may be required and could be arranged by the project worker. In some instances problems with numeracy weren’t flagged up until a young carer was on a placement.

A minimum of weekly contact and a prompt and professional response to all queries from employers meant the project gave a good impression to businesses and all of their staff. All employers that took a young carer were delighted with their performance and attitude. This in turn meant they were willing to contact the project worker should vacancies be arising.

**Volunteering**

Young carers (where possible) were encouraged to volunteer for a local company or organisation. This is a widely accepted stepping stone into employment and was also a valuable method of developing confidence, motivation and self-esteem as well as improving skills.

**Restrictions and Limitations**

The main restriction was time constraints. The aim of a throughput of five young carers every three months did not allow a lot of time for covering every aspect that may have been required. Young carers, by definition, have a caring role which is their priority. This meant they may not always have turned up for training sessions or may not have had sufficient time to commit to a particular training session. Therefore at times training had to take on a holistic approach which may have covered many different issues in one session as opposed to the intended session.

Initially the project worker had set up training sessions which were set times and dates. These were planned around five young carers at a time being on the project for three months. However, it soon became clear that such a rigid approach wouldn’t be suitable. Support for young carers had to be entirely flexible and meet with their needs at times and places that suited them. The programme also developed a more “roll on – roll off” approach as opposed to four intakes.

Issues brought to the project worker may also have had to be dealt with before reaching any employability work, for example problems at home or school.

Meeting young carers for arranged sessions also meant it was impossible to spend a long period of time working on a large project such as the ASDAN Employability Award. No young carers managed to finish the entire award, although some did finish units within the course.

The time commitments required for some young carers meant the planned throughput of five young carers every three months did not really work out. Some young carers required more time, while some required less. All have required sustained contact to allow them to maintain their positive destination.
Case studies have been included in the results section to give a more in depth account of a selection of young carers and how the entire process worked for them. This gives a personal account of the process from goals to outcomes. Names have been changed to protect identity and all young carers have given their permission for their story to be recorded.

Case Study 1
Scott

Scott is seventeen years old and lives with his mother who suffers from mental health problems, depression and alcoholism.

Scott is the primary carer for his mother who is a lone parent and Scott has no other siblings. Scott was referred onto the employability project by the Young Carers Worker who was aware of issues Scott was having surrounding school attendance.

On meeting Scott he discussed how until recently he had seldom been attending school due to suffering from anxiety and panic attacks. Scott also suffered from depression and low mood. Scott had been prescribed medication from his doctor and upon meeting him, and with the help of a supportive girlfriend, he had just managed to start attending school more regularly, on a part time timetable. Scott was however, due to leave school in two months and was determined he would be doing so! Even though he had managed to return, he still didn’t feel that he related to his peers.

Scott was particularly interested in art and discussed how he would like to go to college and study an art course, he wasn’t sure which course or college to apply to and thought he may have difficulties accessing public transport as he had previously suffered panic attacks in busy places.

We discussed how we could work around any potential problems and I agreed to source bus and train timetables so we could plan commuting. I also explained I would access college prospectuses so we could look at potential courses.

We agreed to meet the following week, and despite a reminder phone call Scott didn’t turn up. After a few phone calls Scott agreed to meet up again. In the meantime I photocopied train and bus timetables and information on courses that may be of interest to Scott and posted them to him so he could look at these before we met.

On meeting up with Scott again we discussed how he was getting on at school, and although still not having great relationships with any of his peers he was continuing to attend and getting on well with his teachers.

As Scott had stated he would like to be involved in something to do with art in his training plan I passed on information to him regarding Gallery 37, a project run by Impact Arts. Gallery 37 run through the summer and was an intensive programme featuring dance, fashion, music and a variety of other artistic disciplines and was aimed at those at risk of disengaging with mainstream education. The programme also aimed to assist young people into a positive destination.

Scott also decided to apply to a local college to study an access course that would then allow him to progress his artistic ambitions should college turn out to be suitable for him.

Scott was assisted with his college application by the project worker, and after some interview skills coaching was happy to attend his college interview alone. He received help with financial information from support staff in the college once he was accepted.

In the meantime before the college course started Scott participated in Gallery 37. This opportunity gave him further experience in art alongside further employability support.

After another meeting with Scott to discuss methods of job search he...
approached a local restaurant with his CV and managed to secure a part time position as a waiter.

Scott is an example of a young man with a heavy caring responsibility and emotional problems of his own. Scott was, however, very motivated (particularly not to return to school) so the provision of relevant information and a point in the right direction was enough to allow Scott to make decisions for himself that have ultimately had a positive impact on his life. Working with other agencies to provide broader employability support was also of benefit to Scott as his confidence and self-esteem improved through participating in more practical, hands-on experiences.

The project worker remains in touch with Scott should more support ever be required. At the moment though, he is still at college and continuing to work part time.

Marie helps to care for her sister who has learning difficulties and her grandparents who have heart and breathing problems. Marie also has a slight learning difficulty herself. Her caring role is particularly heavy and she sometimes has trouble coping. She worries if she is away from home for a long period of time and the family have difficulty coping without her.

Marie was referred onto the programme by her young carers worker who was aware of the family situation and the current issues within the home.

Marie regularly felt she lacked control in certain situations, mainly if her grandparents became ill or her sister injured herself so immediately she was registered for the next available first aid course. This helped to give Marie a bit more confidence when dealing with these issues and in her own ability to cope.

Marie indicated she would like to work in catering as she had already done a few days’ work experience in a pub kitchen. Marie was therefore put through her Elementary Food Hygiene Certificate and spent time carrying out work experience with the chef in Dalmellington House.

Marie also received help with her CV, job search skills and participated in customer service and confidence building workshops.

After approximately six weeks support Marie decided she would be willing to attend college if it was on a part time basis. The project worker assisted her with researching courses and finding out about funding as well as with her application.

Marie was successful in gaining an interview and a member of staff accompanied her to this. This was a support to Marie and helped her to maintain her confidence as well as having an advocate to ask questions and elaborate on answers on her behalf.

Marie was successful in securing a college place and is still attending and enjoying the course.

Kevin left school unsure whether he wanted to go to college or try to find training or employment. He was interested in a variety of different types of jobs but had no work experience. He had done well at school but wanted to leave as soon as he could. He had left school at sixteen and had been unemployed ever since.

Kevin was referred onto the programme by the project worker who knew him and the family and was aware of his current situation. As Kevin’s caring role wasn’t particularly heavy he was able to spend a lot of time in the centre working intensively with the project worker developing his employability skills.

As Kevin wasn’t clear on his career path he undertook a variety of more general types of training including presentation skills, customer service, young people and
money, and confidence building. He also started his ASDAN Employability Award. As well as training courses Kevin spent time with the project worker updating and developing his CV, and practicing interview and job search skills. On a weekly basis Kevin was given bus fare so he could travel to the nearest town to search for jobs that weren’t advertised in newspapers or websites. Kevin was then given support to fill out any application forms he received.

Despite not having a clear idea of what he wanted to do Kevin was very motivated and determined to succeed. Less than a month after he was registered on the project the project worker heard of a vacancy in a local factory. Kevin immediately phoned the personnel department and an interview was arranged. After another interview skills session Kevin attended the interview and was successful in gaining a full time position.

Kevin is still working in the factory and is an example of how establishing links with the local business community is essential.

Kevin was friendly, cheerful, and enthusiastic and was a pleasure to work with. He was a really positive influence on the project and other young people who were sometimes less motivated and harder to manage.

Case Study 4

Tommy is eighteen and lives at home with his parents and intermittently his two brothers, two sisters and nieces and nephews.

Tommy cares for both parents who are drug and alcohol dependent. There is also drug and alcohol issues within other members of the family and Tommy assists with the care of the younger members. The family lead a chaotic lifestyle and there is a history of worklessness throughout the family as a whole.

Tommy was probably the most difficult young carer to work with on the project and is the only person who has not yet entered a positive destination. His parents were keen for him to become involved with the project initially as they thought he would enter work straight away. However, as it became apparent that this was not the case Tommy was regularly influenced not to attend meetings and training sessions. Tommy did not have his own mobile phone so all meetings were arranged through his father who regularly did not pass on messages or would call The Centre when he did attend sessions to say he was needed at home.

Tommy seriously lacked confidence and self-esteem and despite participating in some of the training on offer he never fully engaged. He regularly stated that he felt the project was pointless and he would never get a job anyway. During his time on the project two work experience opportunities were arranged for Tommy. These would have given him experience and the opportunity to develop his practical skills as well as his confidence levels. On both occasions he refused to go immediately prior to starting his placements, citing problems at home. Both of these placements were within companies Tommy had said he would like experience with.

The project worker met with Tommy’s parents on two occasions and spoke with them on the phone numerous times. Their main concern about Tommy finding employment was how it would affect benefits coming into the house. Meetings were arranged with East Ayrshire Carers Centre Money Advice Worker to discuss benefits but his parents did not turn up to these. They refused to arrange a meeting in their own home or any other location.

After much deliberation with Tommy’s parents and a lot of advocacy on his behalf, his parents agreed he could be referred to a Lifeskills Training Programme. The referral was made via his careers key worker who had been working with the family for a number of years. Tommy was keen to attend the programme as he knew other people who were doing it. However, he did not attend the interview even though the project worker was picking him up and taking him to it.

At the moment the project worker continues to work with Tommy and his family. This support will be ongoing for as long as Tommy needs and will be as little or as much as he requires. Another referral has been made to Lifeskills and an interview date is awaited. His parents are agreeable to him attending Lifeskills as the training allowance shouldn’t impact on their benefits and they understand progression is likely to be onto Vocational Training as opposed to employment. Participation in the project has also benefitted the wider family as referrals
have been made to Young Carers Workers for some of the younger members.

**Quantitative Analysis**

In all twenty young carers took part in the project. The group consisted of thirteen female young carers and seven male.

The final results were that three young carers gained employment, seven went to college, eight went into training, one returned to school and one has still not reached a positive destination. These results are illustrated graphically in Diagram 1 opposite.

A baseline indicator was taken at the start of participation in the project to measure the feelings of young carers about themselves regarding levels of confidence and self-esteem; willingness to take on responsibility; reliability; the ability to develop relationships; and ability to persevere. This was measured again when the young carer left the project to enter a positive destination. This was to measure how the project had impacted on their softer skills.

To look at confidence and self-esteem young carers were asked the following questions which they answered on a scale of 1 – 10 (1 being strongly disagree, 10 being strongly agree). These results are illustrated graphically in Diagrams 2, and 3 and 4 opposite.

Results indicated that the majority of young carers showed they felt improvements in levels of confidence. These were measured by responding to how they felt about themselves, their appearance and their general confidence within themselves. Improvements in feeling good about themselves and caring about their appearance were assumed to infer an impact on confidence.

Young carers were then asked if they always did their best and if they made a mistake did they try again. The results (illustrated graphically in Diagram 5 opposite) showed the participants ability to persevere, an important skill, particularly in today's job market when perseverance and resilience are often necessary when faced with rejection. Again, these results showed improvement after support from the project.

Willingness to take on responsibility (illustrated graphically in Diagram 6 opposite) is another important employability skill, valued by employers and often lacking in young people due to lack of experience. In this project young carers were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, particularly those working on ASDAN Employability Award. This skill also showed an improvement.

Reliability and timekeeping (illustrated graphically in Diagram 7 opposite) are also skills sought by employers and any changes in this were measured by asking young carers if they were reliable and turned up to appointments on time. These results also showed an improvement for young carers participating in the project.

Finally to measure whether the ability to get on with people improved over the course of the project young carers were asked if they usually got on well with people (illustrated graphically in Diagram 8 opposite). This also showed an improvement.

The above results all illustrate improvements in soft skills for young carers that participated in the project. It could be argued that even failures are successes when looking at this data as despite a desired positive destination not necessarily been achieved, participants have still benefitted from these personal improvements. This will continue to benefit them in the future.
**Section 4: Conclusion and Recommendations**

**Conclusion**

In terms of the goals of this project 95% of the young people involved reached a positive destination, which was employment, education or training. Only one young carer has not yet achieved what was hoped for but continues to work with and be supported by the project worker.

The aim of the project was to assist as many young people as possible into employment, however, in the current economic climate this was exceptionally difficult and illustrates the challenges faced by young people in Scotland today.

Unexpectedly the majority of young carers destination was training, either vocational or lifeskills and hopefully this will continue to develop and enhance their employability skills and enable them to find sustainable employment when they finish their training contracts.

Although the lack of employment was disappointing the development of hard and soft skills has been beneficial to young carers as their confidence, self-esteem and employability skills have improved. This in itself can only stand them in good stead for the future.

**Recommendations**

**Individually focused support**

Young carers face multiple barriers and this project has shown how they can benefit from the support of a specialist that understands their role and the difficulties connected with it.

In working with someone that knows their situation they are given the opportunity to discuss how they want to move towards work while being able to contribute to every stage of the planning process. Each young carer agreed goals and next steps that took into account their personal objectives and constraints.

The role of the project worker in the registration and PDP process was to assist the young carer in identifying obstacles they may face and looking at how these may affect their capacity to enter a positive destination. It was then up to the project worker to develop a simple and clear progression that focused on their needs, identified appropriate supports and was both holistic and flexible. Identifying individual’s strengths and weaknesses allowed training to be matched to young carers needs while being able to plan any additional supports that may be required for example essential skills.

**Mentoring**

The support of a worker that acts as a mentor throughout the period of employability work, and is also available once the young carer has secured a positive destination can make a significant difference to a young person’s journey. Knowing they have someone to contact once in the workplace, college or training establishment can make the difference between sustaining or leaving a positive destination. The worker can also assist with setting further goals and providing help and guidance on issues such as work related benefits.

**Young Carers Involvement**

It is vital that young carers are involved at every stage of the process from planning to reflecting upon their journey once they have secured a positive destination. This means the process remains valid to them and will assist in maintaining motivation while ensuring they gain a clear sense of control and input.

**Employer Relations**

Establishing relationships with local business brings benefits to employers and potential employees. The ability to arrange work experience placements for young carers allows them to develop skills and improve their abilities in likely workplaces, while showing employers they have the potential to enhance their business. Also any training given to young carers during
work experience placements can make them a viable, cost effective option when looking to recruit.

The key to this process is establishing relationships with local companies that are major employers and linking in with those responsible for recruitment.

**Joined up delivery of services**

In their day to day work most professionals working with young carers will have links with school, careers and social work staff. It is imperative to expand these and take them beyond being a source of referral and focus on the delivery of employability work. Many different agencies might be or may have been working with a young carer and it is important not to duplicate work that has already been done. A cohesive, joined up approach ensures the young carer will see the support you are giving is valid and valuable.

**Flexible approach to training**

Not all young carers will undertake all types of training you may have available. Some of your young people may be more job ready than others, while some may have very specific needs, and some more general. A variety of training such as that described in the earlier sections of this report allows services to be tailored to individual needs.

---

**Recommendations for evaluation**

A baseline measure of young carers’ soft skills was taken at the start of the project and at them entering their positive destination. This consistently showed an improvement in skills including confidence, reliability, perseverance, responsibility and the ability to develop relationships. These skills were measured on a questionnaire in which young carers indicated their responses on a scale of 1 – 10.

Feedback on their progression throughout the project may have been better evaluated if the questionnaires were completed after each input, or compared with evaluation sheets taken after young carers had participated in courses delivered by external trainers. This would have given a clearer view of what inputs worked and those that were less successful.

However, the project worker wanted evaluation to be as unobtrusive as possible and did not want to interrupt the flow of work by bombarding young carers with paperwork.
Appendix 1

Referral Form

Name: ________________________________ Date of birth: ________________________________

Address: ________________________________ Postcode: ________________________________

Mobile tel: ________________________________ Home tel: ________________________________

Current Position

At school: (please tick) ________________________________ Name of school and leaving date: ________________________________

Not attending school: ________________________________ Name of school: ________________________________

Unemployed: ________________________________ Length of time unemployed: ________________________________

At college: ________________________________ Name of college and course: ________________________________

Voluntary work: ________________________________ Type of work and location: ________________________________

Brief description of caring role:

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Referred by: ________________________________

Reason for referral (i.e. John is currently unemployed and would benefit from assistance looking for work):

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Future plans/aspirations (if known):

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Signed: ________________________________ Date: ________________________________
Appendix 2

Registration Form

Name: ____________________________ Date of birth: ____________________________ NI no: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________ Postcode: ____________________________

Mobile tel: ____________________________ Home tel: ____________________________

Emergency contact details: ____________________________

Current/last school attended: ____________________________ Leaving date: ____________________________

Qualifications

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Previous Work Experience

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Signed: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
Appendix 3

Personal Development Plan

Where are you now?  Who can help?  Strengths  Next steps

Vision

Opportunities and challenges

Name: 
Signature: 
Key worker signature: 
Date: 

THE EAST AYRSHIRE CARERS CENTRE: EMPLOYABILITY REPORT
Appendix 4

Consent Form

This project is being run by East Ayrshire Carers Centre and the aim is to assist twenty young carers into a positive destination over the course of one year. Any information that you give will be completely confidential and used only by the Project Worker (Hazel Steel). Please read and sign the information below.

I agree to take part in the Employability Project and understand that I can withdraw at any time. I understand services I am offered will not be impacted if I decide to withdraw my participation from the project.

I give permission for my information to be used in the form of a case study and understand that anything that could personally identify me will be removed before publication.

I understand all information I give will be treated in the strictest confidential manner by the Project Worker.

Name:

Signature:

Date:
Appendix 5

Soft Outcomes Questionnaire

Completing this questionnaire will allow us to assess any benefits you may achieve as a result of this project that do not include a positive destination. The results will be analysed by the Project Worker and remain completely confidential.

NI no:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. I feel confident</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>8 9 10</td>
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<td>2. I do my best and if I make a mistake I try again</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I am willing to take on responsibility</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I feel good about myself</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>8 9 10</td>
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<td>5. I usually get on well with people</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I care about my appearance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am reliable and turn up to appointments on time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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Thank you
(Adapted from Experts in Regeneration: Measuring Soft Outcomes; 2008.)
## Training Plan

Name: 

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Goal (what do I want to achieve)</th>
<th>What can I do to achieve this?</th>
<th>How can my success be measured?</th>
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Bibliography


Games and Resources

Internet Based Resources

Interview Skills Games
http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/interviews/ivmulti.htm
http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/ivquiz.htm
http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/assertiveness.htm
http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk/Howtoapply/Interviews/InterviewGame.asp

CV's
http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cvquiz.htm

Downloadable job applications
http://www.learnist.org/job-application-forms/

Job search websites
http://www.mappit.org.uk/Opportunities/default.aspx?Index=1
http://jobseekers.direct.gov.uk/homepage.aspx?sessionid=beffa63a-3f6b-48e4-9559-d1335601e1fe&pid=4
https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/home/home.asp
http://www.caterer.com/
http://www.goodmoves.org.uk/
http://www.s1jobs.com/