



Supporting Young Carers in Ireland - a Youth Work perspective



Step 1

Recognition - naming and research



Naming it

People don't call themselves young carers "It wasn't until I did this work that I realised I had been a young carer. I certainly knew the experiences I was going through but I wouldn't have had a 'name' to put on them – carers to me were middle aged people looking after older parents" Without the name we – both the young person and the service providers don't have the necessary 'hook' to be able to use to look for information or support





Research – the need to define the issue and the extent of it. The work of Saul Becker identifying that on average that 2.7% of young people are young carers and up to 8% are going home from school to caring roles.

Translating research to national demographics

Republic of Ireland 2011 Census asked a question about caring responsibilities:

5,761 carers are aged 20-24

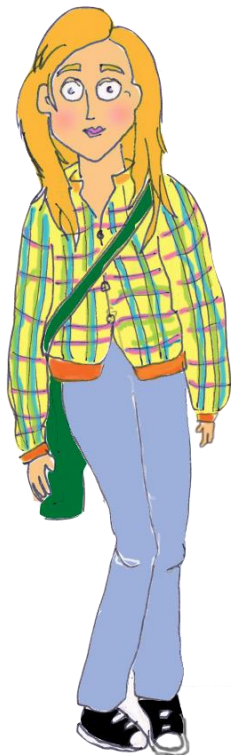
4,244 carers are aged 15-19

4,228 children aged under 15 years

Saul Becker would estimate the real figure to be over 52,000

Similarly in 2011 the Northern Ireland census also asked about caring responsibilities: 6,465 carers are aged 16-19

We know that these totally under-represent the true figures – largely because the young people don't interpret what they do as 'caring' so much as their role being an 'extension of family or personal relations'. Moreover where there are mental health or addiction issues the person is least likely to describe themselves as a carer .





Step 2

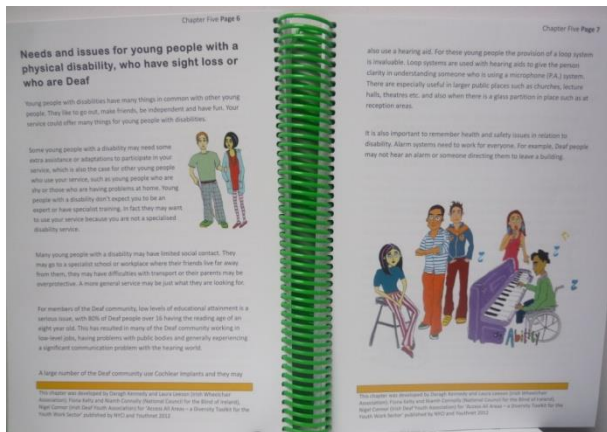
Raising awareness – developing tools and resources



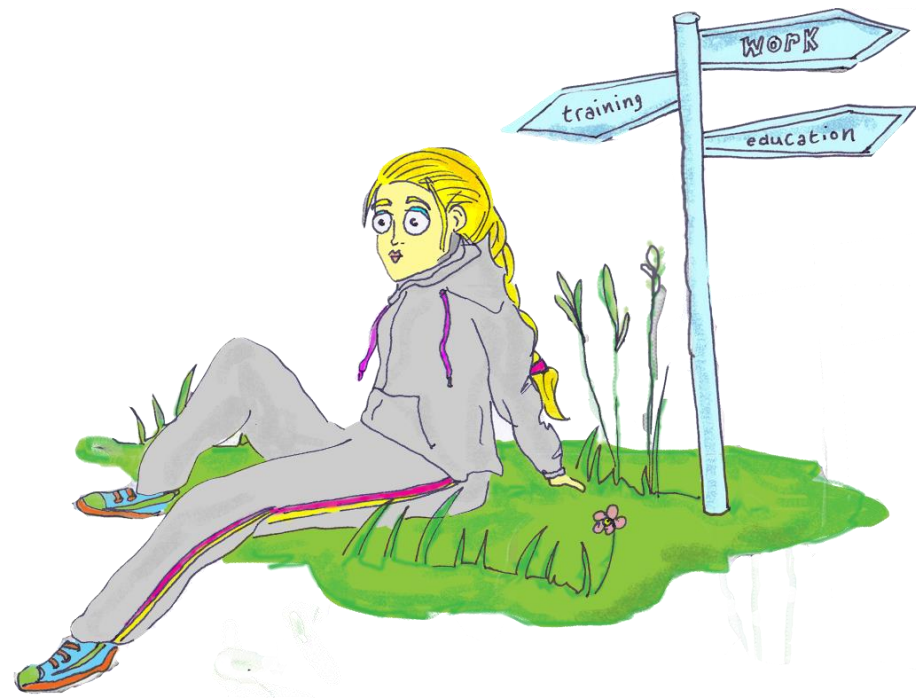
Raising awareness –

you can't do anything strategic until you can offer tools and resources to support young people and service providers. So after the issue was recognised and strategies and money were in place the first focus was on developing tools –in Ireland's case it was a question of borrowing the excellent **tools** which had been developed in Scotland.





Developing Resources –
 this is where NYCI came in – the work
 that had been done by the Carers
 Association fitted in very well with a
 piece of work that I had been working
 on for some years – a Diversity Toolkit
 for the youth work sector



Step 3

Taking action

Challenges – opportunities



Challenges

- 1 Lack of resources and putting it as a priority for youth workers. Working with young carers competes with funding streams that target different needs.
- 2 Need to bring young people together who are experiencing similar things – this necessitates actions by service providers.
- 3 We have the resource and the tools, we had a well publicised drama last summer but we need to keep the publicity up – that's a constant struggle as it competes with louder voices.
- 4 Need for youth work and schools to work closely together – this happens differently throughout the country



Opportunities

Youth work in Ireland - what it looks like and how young carers are being supported

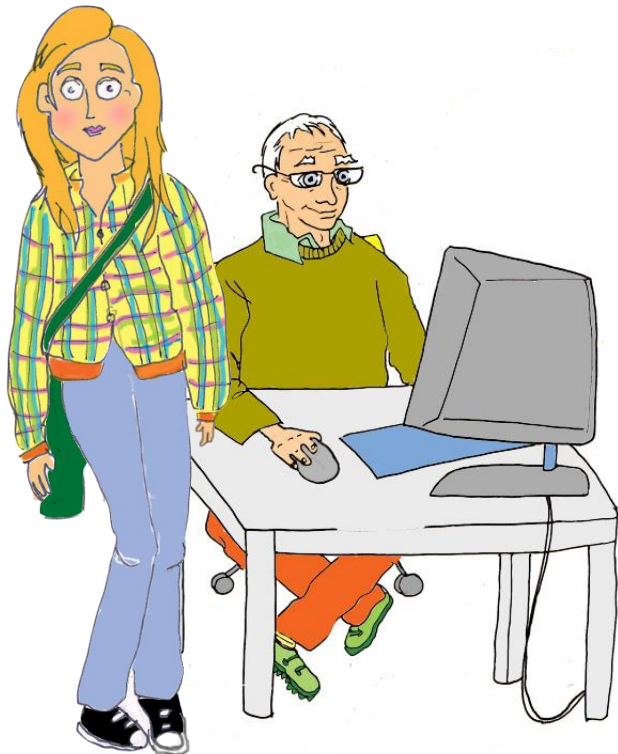
What underpins our values?

What policy is in place to support inclusion?

National Quality Standards Framework

National Outcomes for Children and

Young people (possibilities for influencing policy as a new strategy is developed)



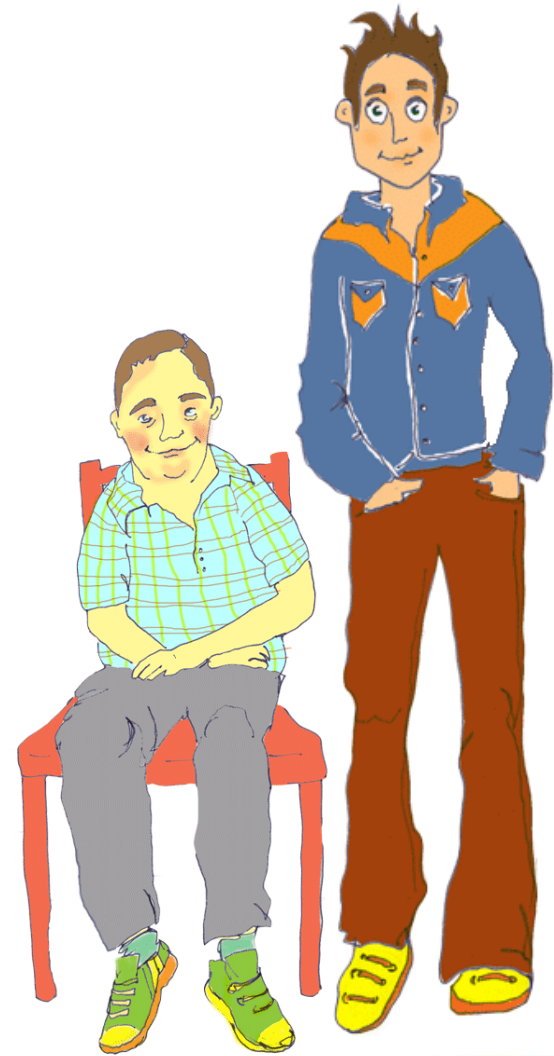
Youth work in practice – its role in supporting young carers

- <http://youngcarerstoolkit.co.uk/engaging/young-carers-groups>



Coming full circle

We can only influence policy
(and therefore practice) if we
recognise and name it at a
national strategic level



Thank you

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www.youth.ie

www.intercultural.ie

