



Supporting the health and wellbeing of  
young carers through sport

Thursday 1 December 2022

We will begin at 1:30pm

@YCAlliance



**Young Carers  
Alliance**



# Welcome and housekeeping

- Ensure microphones are on mute
- We will be recording the session
- Introduce yourself and make use of the chat
- Any unanswered questions will be followed up after the event
- Join in the conversation on Twitter - @YcAlliance





# Football and Community

- A study of support for young carers from 24 Football Clubs was undertaken for the Young Carers Alliance and published in June 2022.
- <https://www.caringtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Football-and-Young-Carers-June-2022.pdf>
- This has led to further activity in other clubs and also in other sports .

# Speakers

- Alex Kershaw City in the Community
- Kelly Hockaday Manchester City Council
- Patrick Knock, Project Manager, Carers Active
- Jodie Deards, Hitchin Netball Club
- John Bangs OBE, Independent Carers Policy Advisor
- Dom Tripp, Rugby Football Union
- Sara Gowen & Niall Bacon, Sheffield Young Carers

# So Many Young Carers

Research for the BBC estimates that there are around 800,000 young carers in the UK; typically around 3 young carers in any class room. In any large football crowd there will be many carers.

There are young carers in almost any youth teams set up or in any playground where a ball is being kicked. Many other young carers would simply love a chance to play or watch football.



# Impact of Caring

Young carers are likely to have lower educational attainment than their peers and this has been made even worse during the pandemic. Caring can also be an isolating experience but having the right support in place can give young carers a far better chance of succeeding in life. We have found that football clubs can help with this.

# Football and Community

Many football clubs are a key part of their local community and offer support to local groups. This can include support for young carers. Most commonly, this is provided through a partnership involving a local young carers service and sometimes also the local council or health service. For professional clubs, work is normally undertaken through a charitable trust or foundation attached to the football club.

The report includes details of various young carers programmes including three linked with premiership clubs. Hear about the collaboration between:

- City in the Community and the Manchester Young Carers Partnership
- MYTIME Young Carers and AFC Bournemouth.





# AFC BOURNEMOUTH

The successful partnership between MYTIME Young Carers and AFC Bournemouth is in a second year and now includes a focus on school based activities, reaching more young carers than before



# Raising the Profile

There has been considerable success in awareness raising through football about a wide range of social issues, including mental health and fighting both racism and homophobia. There is potential to do something similar for young carers and carers more generally.

# Carers Active

In a project funded by the National Lottery, Carers UK have developed a carers active hub to help carers increase activity levels and improve their health and wellbeing.

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/activity-hub/how-to-use>

The Young Carers Alliance is now planning to work together with Carers Active to promote “Carers Active April” in 2023. The first of these month long campaigns was held earlier this year. In 2023 the participation of the Alliance will facilitate far greater focus on young carers





**Carers UK**

# **Carers Active project**

**Patrick Knock**

**Project Manager - Carers Active Campaign**





Carers are much **less likely** to be **active** (14% carers compared to compared with 54%)



Carers are **more likely** to be **inactive** (46% carers compared with 33% of all adults)



**Three quarters** (76%) of carers aged over 55 do not feel that they are able to **do as much physical exercise as they'd like to do**

# Key findings

**76% of carers aged are not able to do as much physical activity as they would like**

Biggest barriers to physical activity:



**Not having the time  
to take part in physical  
activity (88%)**



**Not being  
motivated  
(71%)**



**Not being able  
to afford the  
costs (67%)**



**Not having  
anyone to go  
with (59%)**

# Barriers for carers

- 88% of carers report not having the time to take part in physical activity
- Lack of understanding about physical activity
- Feeling guilty about being away from caring role
- Anxiety
- Feeling tired and lacking energy
- Lack of, insufficient or poor quality replacement care
- Only able to/wish to exercise if the person they care for can as well
- Carer's own health conditions





# Links with loneliness

- Only 1 in 10 (10%) lonely carers are happy with how active they are.
- Only 1 in 4 (24%) carers said have friends or family who encourage them to take part in physical activity.
- For disabled carers only 15% have friends or family who encourage them.
- Lonely carers the figure was 18%.



**Table 6: Percentage of carers saying they often or always feel lonely**

Inactive carers	37%
Fairly active carers	27%
Active carers	22%
Whole England population	5%
All carers	31%

# Outcomes for carers

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**73% of survey respondents said that being physically active makes them feel good about themselves.**

For active carers, a pattern of being active...



**Leads to an increase in:**

- Life satisfaction
- Happiness
- Feelings of worthwhile



**Leads to a decrease in:**

- Anxiety

Although **all wellbeing measures are worse for carers**  
(regardless of activity level) compared with the general population.



# Carers Active project

## Primary aims:

- Increase physical activity levels of carers in England
- Decrease loneliness of carers in England
- Increase carers' health and wellbeing

## Through:

- Direct activity with carers
- Sharing good practice
- Raising awareness
- Collective action
- Learning from carers' outcomes





# Carers Active project

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First national programme to support carers' physical activity.

## **3 year project (2021-2024):**

- Focussed on supporting carers to be more physically active.
- Increase awareness in professionals and organisations
- within different sectors.
- Carers Active Hub
- 'Carers Active April' campaign month
- Online physical activity sessions
- Volunteer programme
- Resources and best practice with service deliverers.



# Carers Active April campaign

- 500 carers signed up to the first ever campaign
- Four online sessions throughout the month.
- Weekly emails with motivation and activity ideas.
- Carers Active April Starter Pack resource to help carers get started with tips and advice for moving more.
- Media involvement to spread the message.
- Carers UK staff involvement
- A [Carers Active April Supporters Area](#) provided ideas and resources for organisations to run their own activities or to simply help promote the campaign. 150 activities offered.
- Encouraged local events leading up to a UK-wide Carers Active April virtual 'Healthathon' on Saturday 30 April.



# Learning and good practice

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- Lots of organisations already supporting carers
- Make activities approachable for beginners and all ages of carers.
- Activities that can be done with the person they care for.
- Flexible formats and variety of times – drop in, online and recorded activities.
- Low cost (free or at a subsidised rate).
- Supported by volunteers or peer support.
- Opportunities to socialise or feel part of something is a driver.
- Targeting messages around carers barriers and addressing these – advice, ideas and tips.



# Opportunities for Sports Clubs

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- Carers Active Hub
- Video resource featuring young and adult carers
- Newsletter featuring updates, resources, best practice and links
- Carers Active Share and Learn sessions – starting point or additional offer
- Helping to inform and share your good practice
- ‘Carers Active April’ 2023 campaign month
- National Carers Week

# Carers, Sports and Social Prescribing

There is a national sports work-stream for “Social Prescribing” and that includes a specific focus on football. Social prescribing workers should refer to services for carers and young carers, including football and other sporting initiatives.

We are now seeing exciting signs of similar developments in other sports; so far including Rugby Union, Rugby League and Netball

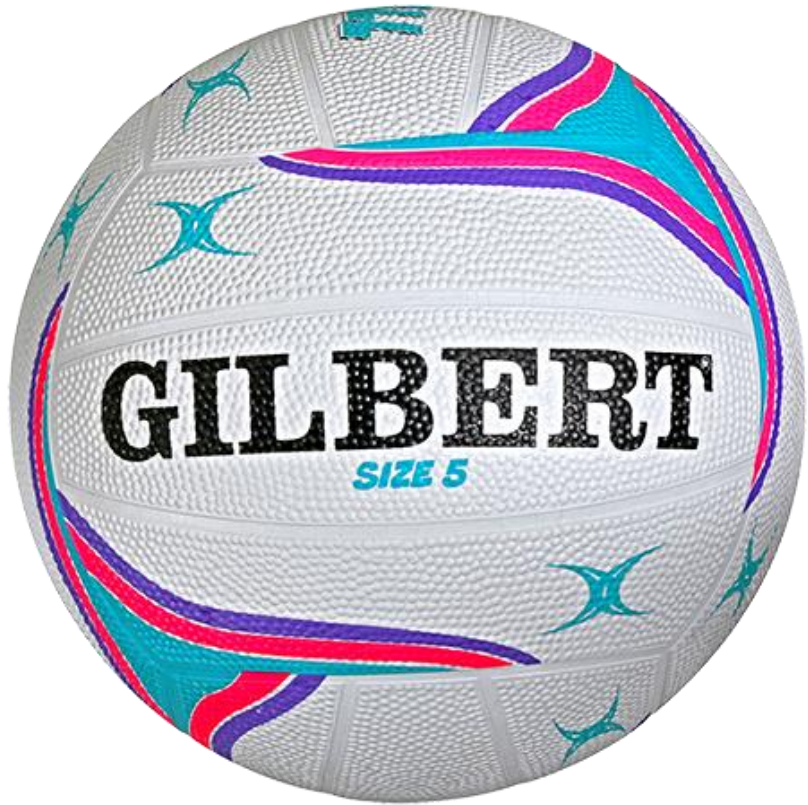
The work of the Young Carers Alliance and Carers Active could help create a whole new tranche of services to refer to, including through social prescribing.



# Rugby Union

England Rugby are looking at how their community rugby clubs might help with identification and support for young carers. England Rugby are looking at how to support young carers and the role rugby clubs play in this. Ideas being developed include:

- Involving young carers in programmes aimed at enhancing young people's physical and emotional wellbeing. (Already happening at Premiership Rugby side, Sale Sharks).
- Supporting clubs to become young carer friendly organisations; through developing local partnerships with young carers organisations
- Supporting young carer focused touch or walking rugby taster sessions.
- Encouraging participation in "Carers Active April" to help kick start new activity



# Hitchin Netball Club

Hitchin Netball Club are encouraging participation of young carers and now ask if players have caring responsibilities, with the opportunity to signpost to the local young carer organisation. Prior to this change, the club knew of only one young carer, but have now identified 14 young carers (10% of club membership).

The club raise funds to help meet costs of registration, kit and help with travel and developed a page on the website promoting young carer awareness.





# City in the Community

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**Alex Kershaw**

**Partnerships Officer  
City in the Community**



**Kelly Hockaday**

**Young Carers Coordinator  
Manchester City Council**



City in the Community supports city youth to empower healthier lives through football. Supporting people across Greater Manchester since 1986, programmes place physical and mental wellbeing at their core, whilst also creating healthy futures and healthy communities.

- \* **KICKS** - uses the power of football and sport to inspire young people in some of the most high-need areas.
- \* **Inspires** - uses the appeal of the Premier League and professional football clubs to support young people in educational settings who are marginalised or at risk of not reaching their potential
- \* **City Thrive** - utilises a blended approach, using football sessions, group workshops and one-to-one mentoring to educate students around mental health subjects whilst also equipping them with the tools to regulate their own mental wellbeing



# Dear Youth Provider

## An open letter from Manchester Young Carers.



Dear Youth Provider

As a young carer I don't have time to go out and do fun things with my friends. This means I am missing out on my childhood experiences to go out to youth clubs, outdoor adventure activities such as camping, or joining a sports team. My peers have the opportunity to enjoy the activities that other young people will consider as normal.

This makes me feel less confident in myself which sometimes make me feel isolated. I also struggle to improve my skills such as communication and being able to speak to my peers about my caring role, making me feel worthless.

I think that youth centres should think about the time of day when planning the activities and the sessions to be more inclusive. This includes taking the extra steps when planning trips such as residential or organise a respite, to allow me to have a short break from home.

I would like youth centres to help me to access the many young people that attend there who also have caring responsibilities, and also have the resources and connections to give me the support I am entitled to.

I think some practical things is to have a Youth worker who is assigned to keep an eye out for me and to make the activities more accessible. Making sure that I am not getting bullied. Maybe running awareness sessions could help with this, so that others understand.

Also it would help if you could think about how I will get to the youth group, maybe help me with my bus pass or link me up to a group nearer to me, you might know other young people who live near me and so we can travel together. It is important that I am not worrying about how I am going to get there. If possible, set up a group for me to meet with other young people in similar circumstances.

I would also like the Youth Centre to stay in contact with other services, so if need be I can get support elsewhere.

I am not asking you to treat me differently just to recognise that I am still a normal young person, and would like to fit in with other young people coming to your centre.

Yours sincerely

Young Carer

## How City in the Community Responded

- Ensured all the staff in their Kicks programme are young carer aware.
- Take a flexible approach, so work with young carers if getting to sessions or if they need an ear during sessions etc.
- Hosted a Young Carers Christmas Party and all the children got kit, photos with trophies, and sports activities.
- On numerous occasions over the past 3 years, CITC have donated books, easter eggs, massive amounts of kit from the youth teams which we distribute via our school champions.
- Raised a high amount of funding to secure technology for young carers who were digitally isolated during lockdown – all young carers who we knew of needed tech, got the tech. Laptops, phones, data etc.
- Offer match day tickets for young carers when they are available.
- During lockdown supported young carers online sessions – joint facilitation and contributions via our friends at the Proud Trust.
- Donate and run an appeal each Christmas donating toys, toiletries, clothing
- Provided free admission to young carers for the Blue Run.
- Always on hand to support, happy to help when we approach i.e. to help secure transport , or provide videos, attend and support our events.



**Craig Bell - Football Partnership Manager**  
**City in the Community**



**Kit to Early Help and Social Work Teams for  
Young Carers**



**Young Carers City in the Community Christmas  
Party**



**Books and Easter Egg  
donations**



**Christmas Gifts**



**Kit and Technology during  
Covid.**





Inspired by the England Lionesses 2022 Win, a group of young carers at a local primary have set up a girls football team.

City in the Community Kit donations have been worn with pride by the new recruits!

#SupportNotSympathy



Phil Foden & Ella Toone  
Moss Side Power  
House JD Sports Pitch  
Opening

Football can make a huge and positive difference to  
the lives of Young Carers!

Teamwork and Belonging  
Physical Activity and Managing Emotions  
Reduce Stress and Isolation  
Builds Resilience  
Aspirations and Achievements outside of Caring role.  
Opportunities to expand world, - connecting with  
people from different backgrounds.



[Beth Powney](#) .  
**Young Carer for her Brother and her  
Mother.**

Football was a solid element  
throughout my life during that time  
period.



**1<sup>st</sup> Class Degree in  
Football Coaching  
Management &  
Student of the year!**



**Goalkeeper  
Salford City  
Football Club**

# **Sheffield Young Carers: Campaigns and Partnerships**

**Sara Gowen**

**Managing Director**

**Niall Bacon**

**Young People's  
Project Worker**





# Young Carers Campaign!

- ▶ CRD 2017 - our Action Group met with local MPs
- ▶ 2018 Campaign for access to sports and leisure
- ▶ Accessing discounted activities
- ▶ What worked and what didn't!

*“It makes me want to swim”*

(young carer with free leisure pass)

# What are we doing now?

- ▶ Carers Week 2021 taster sessions
- ▶ Partnership working with Sheffield City Trust
- ▶ Sheffield's two football clubs
- ▶ More than just sports ...

# Thank you for listening

## Any questions?

[www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk)

Tel: 0114 258 4595



# Opportunities for Development

We can see a range of highly effective, low cost, high impact initiatives that promote young carers' emotional and physical wellbeing and also help raise awareness in the community. Many of the activities being delivered enhance young carers fitness and also promote their social inclusion.

Proposals for development include:

- Advice to support footballing and other sports organisations in becoming young carer friendly
- Seeing young carers issues become embedded in safeguarding training
- The Football Association and other national sports bodies asked to take up young carers issues and encourage action by clubs



# Research

Young carers often struggle to find time to exercise or participate in organised sporting activities. Research provides plenty of evidence that enabling children and young people to be physically active promotes their wellbeing and likely future life chances.

There is as yet very little published that specifically acknowledges the role of young carers.

# Opportunities for Development

- Academics within the network could encourage researchers interested in young people and sports to be better aware of the needs of young carers and young adult carers
- Ensure that funding organisations such as Sports England and the Football Foundation have carers and young adult carers on their agenda
- Groups of clubs or a league might consider taking action together, potentially including joint funding bids and shared activities
- Liaise with Carers UK's Carers Active project and others about how football and sports in general can help promote the wellbeing of carers of all ages, including young carers
- Work with NHS to ensure that social prescribing services are aware of, and refer to services for carers and young carers, including footballing and other sporting initiatives.



# For More Information or Discussion

Contact:

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- or @JohnBangs15 (Twitter).

[www.youngcarersalliance.org](http://www.youngcarersalliance.org)