Ten Years of Youth Voice, Influence and Change

Sheffield Young Carers' Action Group

2015-2025



What is Action Group?

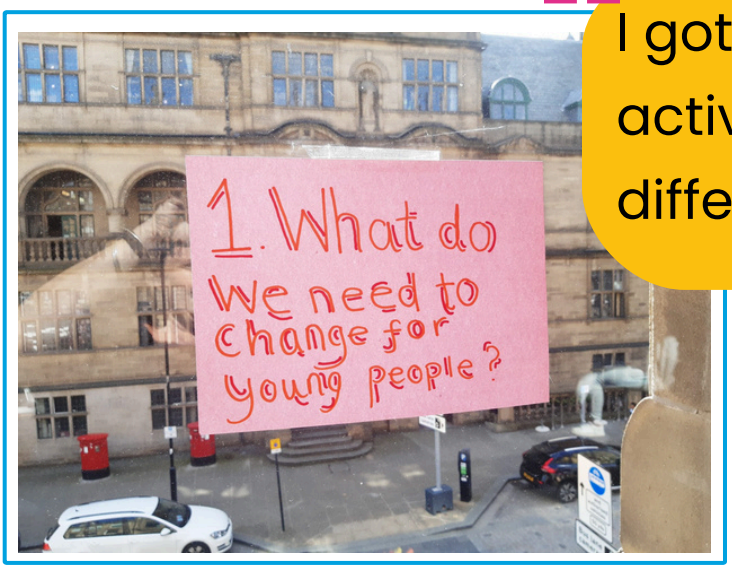
This report celebrates ten years of activity, influence and impact delivered by the Action Group, Sheffield Young Carers' (SYC) youth participation forum for young people aged 12-25. The group was formed to ensure young carers were able to meaningfully inform the services that affect their lives, including SYC but wider policy and practice as well. Over the past decade, members have used their lived experience to improve the lives of young carers and young people affected by familial substance misuse, while developing skills in advocacy, leadership, campaigning and representation.

Within SYC, Action Group members have played a key role in recruitment, strategic planning, trustee discussions and funding bids and meetings with funders. They have planned and hosted AGMs, co-produced training, resources and learning material and provided guidance on the organisation's work with schools and education providers. Younger SYC members also contribute regularly, ensuring their views are represented, while those aged 18 and over can continue their involvement through positions on the Board of Trustees.

Beyond the organisation, Action Group members have represented young carers locally, nationally and internationally. They have worked with Sheffield City Council, NHS trusts, universities, researchers, politicians and voluntary sector partners, speaking at conferences, contributing to consultations and campaigns, and helping shape policy and practice.

Alongside their influencing work, members build friendships, gain skills and accreditations, develop confidence and take a break from their caring responsibilities.

The achievements outlined in this report demonstrate the significant contribution young carers can make when given meaningful opportunities to participate, lead and influence change.



> I got to try a lot of different activities while making a difference with Action Group.

Ten years in numbers



97

Young people have been members



£105,000

distributed to 362 young carers across the city to give them a break from caring



3

group members members joined the SYC Board of Trustees



74

Citzenship ASDANs acheived



60

Volunteering ASDANs achieved



55

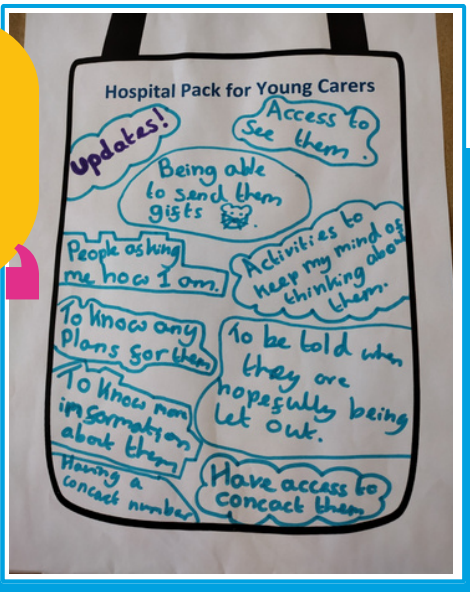
Leadership ASDANs acheived

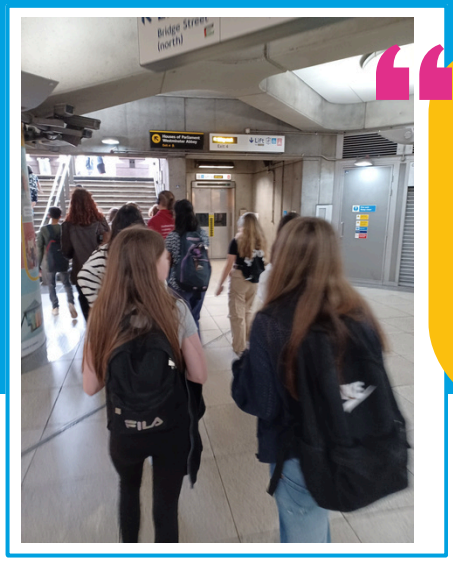
Key achievements

Action Group has

- Met Prime Minister Theresa May in Westminster to present concerns and recommendations to improve the lives of young carers everywhere
- Successfully campaigned for many years to get young carers added into the Ofsted Inspection Framework (added in 2025)
- Co-founded Young Carers National Voice, a network that brings together young carers from all over the country to campaign on the issues that are most important to them. Through YCNV, Action Group co-produced mental health resources and training that has been distributed nationally
- Presented at the International Young Carers Conference (Eurocarers)
- Met the Children's Commissioner for England and asked her to stand up for the rights of young carers
- Successfully campaigned for the inclusion of young carers in the Health and Care Act, presenting evidence to members of the House of Lords and delivering an open letter to 10 Downing Street, lobbying the government to add an amendment to the Health and Care Bill (2022). This led to young carers getting the right to be involved in care planning when the person they care for is discharged from hospital, as well as a duty for Integrated Care Boards to involve carers (including young carers) in service and patient planning
- Helped to put the Health and Care Act legislation into practice in Sheffield by co-producing the Carers Passport, carers webpages and a discharge pack now being used across Sheffield Teaching Hospitals
- Co-produced the 2025 new young carers assessment process in Sheffield
- Appeared on local and national media to raise awareness about young carers

> "It gives me a voice to say what I'd like to help other young carers"





> It takes time to spread our message but we have been doing things to help people get more support

Action Group has

- Co-created and presented a travel and leisure petition to Full Council meeting at Sheffield City Council in 2019. This successfully granted young carers across Sheffield discounted leisure passes and free bus and tram travel during the school summer holiday in 2019. They continue to lobby the South Yorkshire Mayor to reinstate free/reduced travel for young carers across the region.

- Worked with Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust (now Sheffield Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust) to inform and support their implementation of the national 'Triangle of Care' framework

- Got training and ran grant decision-making panels for the SYC Activity Fund, distributing over £105,000 to 362 number of young people across the city, to give them a break from their caring roles

- Met a reporter, researchers and young adult carers from Japan, leading to one group member being featured in a national Japanese newspaper, and informing young carer policy and practice development across Japan

- Met an Australian Young Carer Service CEO who was researching young carers provision in the UK and the USA. Action Group were highlighted in her report as an example of good practice

- Won the Sheffield Youth Award for Youth Campaigner of the Year in 2024, recognising a decade of sustained youth-led campaigning and influence.

- Taken part in a research project that led to the development of a Participation and power co-production tooklit, used by young carer and other organisations nationally

- Strengthened accountability and co-production within Sheffield Young Carers, with young people embedded in governance, recruitment and strategic planning

Impact on young people

Being part of the Action Group has had a lasting and empowering impact on the young people involved, transforming how they see themselves, their experiences and their ability to create change.

Over the past ten years, young carers in SYC's Action Group have developed confidence, leadership and communication skills through real-world opportunities to speak to professionals, influence decision-makers and represent their peers.

Participation has supported young people to recognise their lived experience as expertise, helping them build self-belief, resilience and a strong sense of identity beyond their caring role.

Alongside these personal outcomes, Action Group members have gained tangible achievements, including ASDAN awards that formally recognise their learning, skills and commitment to social action, campaigning and participation. These accreditations have supported progression into further education, training, employment and volunteering, while strengthening CVs and future aspirations.

Young people in Action Group have also been offered training in rights and political systems, campaigning, public speaking, workshop facilitation, media, grant panel decision making, and job recruitment panel training.

Crucially, the Action Group has provided a safe, supportive space where young carers can connect with others who understand their experiences, take pride in their achievements and turn challenges into positive action. The impact is not only felt during their time in the group, but continues long after, equipping young people with the confidence, skills and recognition to influence their own futures and the systems around them.

> "Action Group really helped me in the long term... having opportunities to develop skills and have experience working with professionals gave me the skills and confidence to go to university."



Moving on

Since leaving Action Group

3 members have joined Sheffield Young Carers' Board of Trustees

1 member has been elected as a Sheffield City Councillor

1 member became a Poverty Truth Commissioner

1 member is a governor for the Sheffield mental health trust

7 members have served in Sheffield Youth Cabinet

1 member is a Youth Ambassador for the Children's Commissioner for England

1 member did work experience in a local MP's office

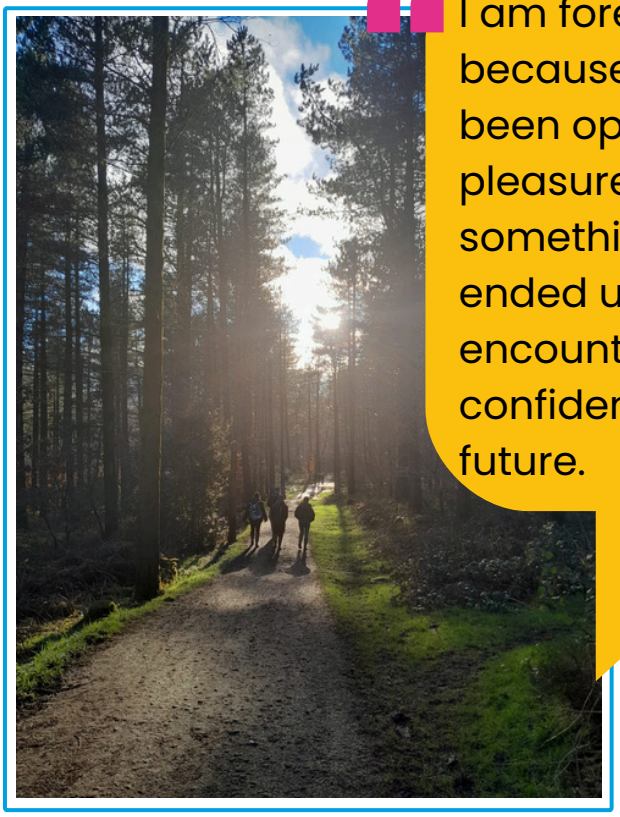
Many more have progressed into the studies and careers they hoped for and report the lasting impact that Action Group has had on their futures and their wellbeing.

Why the Action Group matters for Sheffield

The Action Group has embedded young carers' voices within the city's key systems and partnerships, ensuring that policy and practice are shaped by lived experience. Action Group members have worked directly with Sheffield City Council, contributing to the development and review of the Sheffield Carers Strategy, Carers Action Plans and multi-agency reviews, and by presenting at the Town Hall to councillors and senior officers.

Young carers have influenced health and social care practice through sustained partnership with Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust and the Integrated Care Board, including co-producing Carers Passports, confidentiality guidance, mental health training, and hospital discharge improvements. The group has also engaged with the 0–19+ Partnership Board, multi-agency Carers Implementation Groups, the young carers' Schools Network, the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub, and voluntary sector partners to strengthen identification and early support for young carers across education and wider services.

Through meetings with local MPs, engagement with the South Yorkshire Mayor, and participation in city-wide strategic planning, the Action Group has ensured that young carers are visible within Sheffield's decision-making landscape. In doing so, the group has not only improved outcomes for young carers, but has strengthened Sheffield's approach to co-production, accountability and inclusive public services, contributing to a city that recognises and values young people as partners in change.



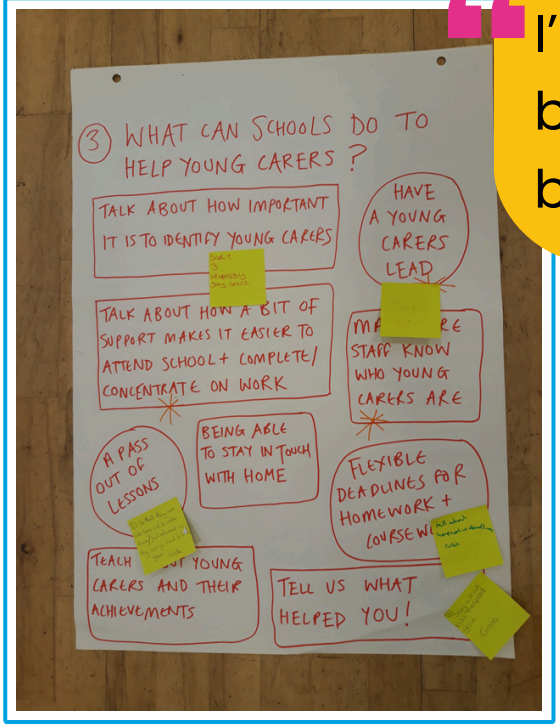
> "I am forever grateful for being part of SYC because many doors of opportunities have been opened for me and it has been such a pleasure to have always said yes to doing something out of my comfort zone which ended up being the best thing I encountered. It has also given me confidence for what's to come in the near future."

What's next for Action Group?

Action Group continue to be a voice and a platform for young carers everywhere. The group allows young carers to be partners and leaders, to gain influence and to engage young carers in social and political activism. In 2026, they worked hard to promote resources they created in collaboration with Healthwatch, training healthcare staff across the NHS to identify young carers and helping young people to recognise if they might be a young carer.

The group continues to provide meaningful and constructive feedback to services and organisations across Sheffield and beyond, for example meeting with Sheffield City Council to co-develop resources for children and families in the social care system.

In 2027, they hope to meet with the Lord Mayor of Sheffield and Sheffield MPs on Young Carers Action Day (10th March 2027), presenting the changes they would like to see happen in Sheffield.



"I'm proud of the person I've become and the things I've been able to give."



"We have all come so far and pushed ourselves to try new things."

A final word from Laura Selby, Sheffield Young Carers Co-CEO and Action Group founder

I have been incredibly proud to see the achievements and impact of young people in our Action Group over the last ten years, both individually and as a collective. From the outset, we have been committed to ensuring that the young people we work with have meaningful opportunities to help lead our organisation and influence the services and policies that affect their lives.

Since founding our Action Group in 2015, it has been an exciting and inspiring journey. The group has worked with generosity, courage and creativity to improves the lives of all young carers, not only in Sheffield but far beyond. From distributing funds to help young carers in need of a break, to contributing to our annual organisational planning; from participating in the local Carers Strategy Implementation Group, to speaking at international conferences and helping secure recognition of young carers in key UK legislation—the group has ensured that their expertise and lived experience have shaped policy, practice and individual lives. It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to be part of their journeys and to see the ripples of their work grow into tidal waves of change!

I would like to thank each of the 97 incredible group members who have worked so hard to create positive, lasting change for all young carers, alongside the pressures and challenges of their own caring roles. I also want to thank all the skilled and committed staff and volunteers who have supported and facilitated the group over the past decade. At Sheffield Young Carers, we are immensely proud here of what has already been achieved by Action Group. We can't wait to see what the group will do next!

"If you want a place where everyone relates to you, you should come here"



Thank you

Sheffield Young Carers would also like to thank **National Lottery's Reaching Communities programme** and the **Garfield Weston Foundation** that currently fund the majority of Action Group's work.

Garfield Weston FOUNDATION

COMMUNITY FUND

As well as all previous funders over the last ten years - thank you, we couldn't have done it without you!

For more information, contact

Sheffield Young Carers

www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk