

PARENT TO PARENT

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



STAFF

Head of Service

Trudy Doidge

Admin & Finance Manager

Debra Ritchie

Operations Manager/ Neonatal Worker

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Admin. Assistant

Susan Donnachie

Support & Advocacy Workers

Mairi Simpson

Wendy Gerrard

Debbie Shepherd

Sheila Day

Charleen Morton

Mandy Anderson

Sheena Thomson

Lynn Stewart

Vicky Stepiens (from August 2019)

Young Persons' Advocacy Workers

Sally Hudson

Lynn Irving (from June 2019)

Lynzi Chalk

Chloe MacDougal (until June 2019)

Our Mission is:

To provide support, information and advice to families of children with additional needs.

To enable the voice of parents and young people with additional needs to be heard by the statutory and formal bodies.

To enable and empower parents and young people to take control of matters that may affect their lives, and to have a sense of belonging.

Our aim is:

To offer support, contact and information through self-help, mutual support, assistance, research and education

To support parents to overcome their feelings of loneliness and isolation

To reduce their stress by reinstating hope and increasing their confidence

HEAD OF SERVICE



We say goodbye to 2019 and Hello to 2020, time flies by so quickly.

Reflecting on this past year has made me realise what challenging times we are in. Many of our families are struggling with poverty which impacts mental health and well-being. We have established great partnership relationships with Foodbanks and charitable trusts to help alleviate this struggle. Families and staff have rallied round to source equipment, clothing, toys etc. – as a wise person once said *'it takes a village to raise a child'*, this sense of togetherness is what makes Parent to Parent such a great family to be part of. This is more so as the whole world struggles with Covid-19,

thankfully Parent to Parent is able to still operate, albeit virtually. In these unprecedented and challenging times, there is so much kindness out there.

Thank you for the privilege and honour of allowing us to walk alongside you, and to all my staff team and board members, thank you for all your tireless support and energy. Thank you to all our funders for believing in us and helping us to be a shoulder to lean on for so many children and families.

Trudy Doidge
Head of Service

Demand for support to cope with the many pressures that families face continues and Parent to Parent supported 1050 parents and 260 children and young people between April 2019 and March 2020.

However, our improved ways of working are reducing waiting times and with additional approaches being introduced in 2020 it is hoped that these will reduce further.

Families are being supported by a suite of training opportunities, facilitated by our workers, and working in partnership with Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists. This has proved to be beneficial to many parents. One of the suggestions from one of these training sessions was that Yoga would be of benefit; a parent was able to offer support for this and yoga classes as well as mindfulness sessions were delivered by the parent. This organic natural network demonstrates the skill set many of our parents and carers have, and their willingness to share and support each other. Another great example of this is our Volunteer Peer Supporter Programme which will be rolled out across Tayside in the coming months and years.

Our staff team are a loyal and dedicated bunch, who work tirelessly to ensure that families and children have a voice and feel supported, and are always going the extra mile and trying innovative and creative ways of working.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE
TO RAISE CHILD



Support for families of a child with additional needs

Parent to Parent will support any parent/carer of a child with an additional need living in Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross. Many parents need emotional support, especially when their child is undergoing assessment or has recently been diagnosed. The team of support workers is experienced in supporting parents through this difficult time. They also run support groups and surgeries in many towns across the region, a workshop on managing challenging behaviour, provide support and advocacy at meetings and appointments, information about local services that can offer extra help to families and organise family days out during school holidays. One support worker is trained to give loss and bereavement support to families whose child has died. In addition to the ten staff who support parents there are three Young Persons' Advocacy Workers who support children and young people to voice their views and concerns. They help them to tackle what is worrying them which boosts their confidence and self-esteem.

Support for families on low income

The support workers were increasingly aware that some families were struggling to manage on a very low income and needed extra help to improve their standard of living. Additional funds were secured to enable one support worker to help these families by arranging appointments with money advice services, helping them to complete forms, encouraging them to consider college courses and applying for jobs and bolstering their self-esteem. She applied to Cash for Kids for essential items that their children needed, the Family Fund for household items, trust funds for holidays and made several applications to the Food Bank. She also sourced free sanitary products which she gave to all her families. During the year the support worker and her colleagues increased families' income by £270,966 and provided goods worth £8,900. Parent to Parent is looking to expand this project into other areas where there is a need.

Carnoustie & Monifieth Medical Group

The initiative to run surgeries in Carnoustie and Monifieth Medical Centres continued this year and supported 14 parents and 29 children and young people. Hour long appointments were made to give referrals the opportunity to discuss their worries and concerns and additional support was provided when needed e.g. support at school or social work meetings. For many parents this was invaluable as it gave them sufficient time to talk about the problems they were facing and to build a rapport with their support worker. For many children and young people it was preferable for them to see their support worker at school rather than in the clinic and so the worker liaised with schools to enable this to happen.

The demand was greater for support for children and young people so the hours available to them were increased. Feedback from evaluations show a high level of satisfaction with comments including:

"My son is finally engaging with a support worker despite not being able to do this in the past", "Please provide more staff like the ones we are now speaking with. The support they are giving us is invaluable" and "It's a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere for my daughter, can already see some differences in how she is being".

Parent to Parent is keen to continue to deliver this service and to develop it across Tayside.

New work

Our Head of Service has been working in partnership with the CAMHS innovation team to pilot a workshop to parents supporting them to understand and help their children to self-regulate. The pilot workshop concluded in December 2019, but the work with parents continues via Parent to Parent facilitating a peer support group co-facilitated and located at St. Pius Primary school.

Evaluations from the pilot identified that stress levels for parents had reduced due to the workshop, and that parents benefited by being part of a group.

The workshop used principles of Dr. Stuart Shanker (D-Phil) a Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Psychology and the CEO of the MEHRIT Centre Ltd

The course assisted parents to understand that their own stressors were impacting their ability to self-regulate, which then impacted their ability to support their child to self-regulate. We discussed how the brain worked simplifying it to 'red brain and blue brain' which assisted parents to adapt and understand strategies to manage their own and their children's anxieties and associated behaviours.

The group will continue to meet fortnightly and will continue to focus on the above support, whilst widening to topics identified by the group.



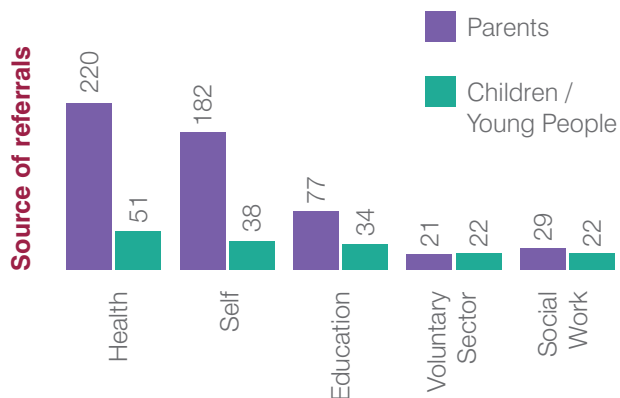
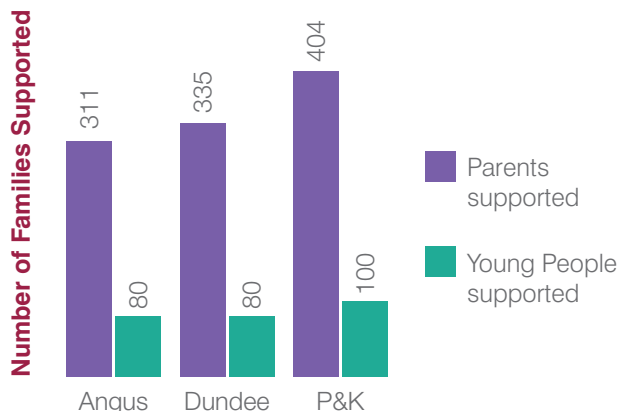
"I have a better understanding of my child"

"It's great to feel that I'm not the only one having these issues"

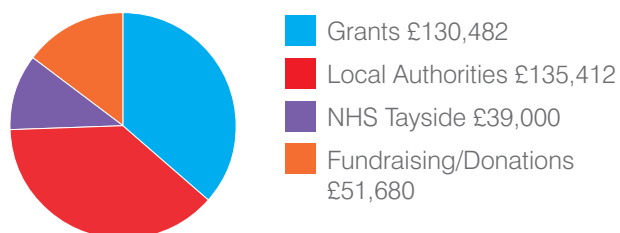
"Allowed me to feel less isolated and not on my own, gained advice from Trudy"

"I feel Trudy has helped me and listened to me non-judgementally"

"Learned more about ways of dealing with situations, to look after myself too"



Income



Acknowledgements

Parent to Parent is grateful for the financial support it received from Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross Local Authorities and NHS Tayside. Several Trust Funds and other organisations also contributed to the development of the service during the year. These include:

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|--|--------------------------------|
| Miss Agnes Hunter Trust | The Northwood Charitable Trust |
| Carnoustie & Monifieth Medical Centres | NHS Community Innovation Fund |
| Community Fund | PF Charitable Trust |
| Gannochy Trust | The Robertson Trust |
| Harold Adams Trust | St. Andrews Family Project |
| Henry Smith Foundation | Stafford Trust |
| Hugh Stenhouse Foundation | The Tillyloss Trust |
| Kiltwalk | Williamina McLaren Trust |
| Morrisons Foundation | |

We could not provide the level of service we do without the assistance of many other organisations. These include:

Angus Carers, Angus Council Education Dept., Arder Church, Ardler Complex, Carnoustie Baptist Church, Dundee Disabled Children's Association, Dundee City Council Education Dept., Kinross Learning Centre, Letham Sheltered Housing Hub, Lochee Hub, Perth & Kinross Education Dept., The Pitstop Forfar, Red House Hotel Coupar Angus, Scottish Health Council, Sunflower Centre Perth Royal Infirmary, Voluntary Action Angus, Woodlea Cottage.

Also thanks to the Trustees of the Scott Radmer Fund for their continued support of a small group of families with children with life limiting conditions.



Examples of support provided during the year

A mother of a three year old girl with social and communication difficulties was referred for emotional support and support at meetings. At the first visit she explained to her support worker that she had to leave her privately rented house within six weeks and had no idea where she would go. She had contacted housing services but had not been offered anything. This, together with financial difficulties and the stress of caring for her daughter was causing anxiety and depression. The support worker offered to call her local MP and try to find a solution which the mother gratefully accepted. The worker made several calls and was able to tell the mum they would be allocated temporary housing until a permanent home was available. This provided some relief but the mum was anxious about the locality as she did not want to change her children's school or the little girl's nursery as it had taken her a while to settle there.

When the family moved to the temporary accommodation they were two bus rides away from the school and nursery which the mum had to pay for and could not afford. Her support worker was able to secure some free bus tickets for which the mum was extremely grateful. They moved to their permanent home three months later but it was outside the catchment area for the children's school and nursery. The support worker explained what needed to be done to request a place at the existing school and helped the mum to do this. She went with the mum to meetings concerning the placing request and spoke for her when needed. The request was successful and the children were able to continue to attend the school.

The family is now settled and coping well. The little girl has been diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and the support worker is helping the mum to cope with the challenges this brings. She has provided visuals to help the girl follow instructions and routine, given advice about ways to deal with challenging behaviour and helped the mum apply for Disability Living Allowance which was awarded.

The worker is encouraging the mum to attend one of her support groups so she can meet other parents and gain support from them. She will continue to support the mum while encouraging her to be independent.



Contact Details

If you would like further information about Parent to Parent please contact:

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