

A chat with the We Care Team...

For our final interview in this series, we spoke with Sharon Berrie, Advocacy & Participation Manager, South West for Who Cares Scotland.



‘Independent advocacy is the tool to ensure that people understand their rights and have voices heard in decisions affecting them’.

Q -Can you tell us a wee bit about Who Cares Scotland?

A-Who Cares? Scotland is Scotland’s only national independent membership organisation for Care Experienced people. Our strategic vision is to secure a lifetime of equality, respect, and love for Care Experienced people in Scotland. At the heart of Who Cares? Scotland’s work are the rights of Care Experienced people and the power of their voices to bring about change. We provide individual relationship based, lifelong independent advocacy and a range of connection and participation opportunities for Care Experienced people across Scotland.

We work alongside Corporate Parents and others to broaden understanding and challenge the stigma experienced by Care Experienced people. We create opportunities for people with lived experience of care to influence policy makers, leaders, and elected representatives locally and nationally to shape legislation, policy, and practice. We do this collaboratively to build on the aspirations of The Promise and secure positive change.



Q - Tell us about the current Action for Advocacy Campaign.

A- Our Action on Advocacy campaign is now live, and we are calling for a statutory right to independent, relationship-base, lifelong advocacy for all care experienced people who need it. The upcoming Promise Bill is a critical opportunity to enshrine this right in law, fulfilling the commitments made to Care Experienced people five years ago in The Promise. It stated, “Care Experienced children and adults must have the right and access to independent advocacy, at all stages of their experience of care and beyond”.

Q -What is independent advocacy mean for care-experienced individuals

A-Independent advocacy means different things to different care-experienced individuals but we know that for everyone, our advocates have no conflict of interest, they work only for that individual and are completely free from outside influence. Other benefits of independent advocacy are:

- Supports children and adults to express their views.
- Informs of the different options open to you.
- Ensures the voice of children and adults are heard when decisions are being made that affect them.

Q -Tell us about the the Lifelong Helpline

A-Our lifelong helpline is open Monday – Friday, 12 – 4, funded by the Scottish Government, we recognise that some care experienced people do not stop needing advocacy when they reach a certain age.

Care experience is lifelong, and we believe advocacy should be too. Our Action on Advocacy is part of an over arching Lifelong campaign that we launched at our Love Rally in 2023..

Our helpline can help with anything from benefits to housing, from accessing care records to throughcare, if we can't help you, then we'll find an organisation that can. Support can be over the telephone by calling 0330 107 7540 or via email at help@whocaresscotland.org whichever is the easiest way for you to contact us



Q -Tell us about some of the participation work the organisation has done & the Advocacy in action series.

A-Our participation work is spread across the country with local groups ensuring connection and a sense of belonging is offered where possible.

We have an Empowering Voices programme, preparing to recruit soon for training sessions in August 2025. This programme is a commitment from Who Cares? Scotland to help the care community learn vital campaigning, activism, and public speaking skills. We will connect you to other influential Care Experienced people and give you the opportunity to drive change together. Who Cares? Scotland have a strong history in driving change, if you would like to apply to join the next training group, keep checking our EVP page on the website.

We have a series of resources to support our Action on Advocacy campaign explaining the importance of independent advocacy is a variety of scenarios. You can read Finn, Iona, Emily and Sams stories if you search for Action on Advocacy on our website.

These cartoons have been very well received and have really helped people understand what independent advocacy is and how beneficial it is, which is why we are calling for it to be enshrined in law.