

## CRWIA – Caring is Learning

[Definition of a CRWIA - Child rights and wellbeing impact assessment external guidance and templates - gov.scot](#)

### Topic of the CRWIA:

Carers Trust works to transform the lives of unpaid carers. It partners with its network of local carer organisations to provide funding and support, deliver innovative and evidence-based programmes and raise awareness and influence policy. Carers Trust's vision is that unpaid carers are heard and valued, with access to support, advice and resources to enable them to live fulfilled lives.

This CRWIA is assessing Carers Trust Scotland's Caring is Learning programme, funded by The Robertson Trust, which includes:

- Three Network Partner Test and Learn sites trialing different interventions
- Young Carers Education Expert Panel
- Development of nation-wide awareness-raising toolkit including trauma informed practice workshops, young carer identification resources etc.
- Regional learning exchanges between education and local carer organisations
- Young Carers in Schools challenge
- Young carers educational campaign

### Summary: What is the purpose of this policy or service?

Research tells us that young carers in poverty are less likely to reach attainment goals in school. Our Caring is Learning programme, funded by The Robertson Trust, will work collaboratively with our network of local carer organisations and wider education stakeholders, including schools, colleges, universities and strategic partners to ensure big change both locally and nationally. The intended overall impact of the Caring is Learning programme is for young carers to be able to fulfil their aspirations and not be disadvantaged due to their caring role.

The intended outcomes of this work are:

- Test local approaches to supporting young carers living in poverty in education to produce a body of evidence on solutions that work for young carers and can have a lasting impact on reducing their poverty and trauma
- Increased involvement of young carers in influencing and shaping local and national policies that affect them
- Increased knowledge and understanding of young carers from educational practitioners
- Improved trauma-informed practice in education settings to increase young carers' engagement in school

- Increased identification of young carers in schools
- Increased numbers of young carers moving into further and higher education, training and employment
- Increased partnership working between schools and local carers services
- Increased understanding of young carers' transferable skills and experience
- Influence improvements in national and local education policies and practices to support young carers to reach their potential

### **Which articles of the UNCRC does this policy/measure impact on?**

- Article 12: Respect for the views of the child – listened to and taken seriously, children's views taken into account during decision-making, supported to share their views in a way that is best for them.
- Article 13: Right to access and share information
- Article 15: Right to meet with friends and joins groups/organisations
- Article 28: Right to Education.
- Article 29: Right to an education that develops every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

### **What impact will your policy/measure have on children's rights?**

The Caring is Learning programme complies with UNCRC requirements.

It also has the potential to advance the realisation of children's rights in Scotland, as it seeks to use respect for the views and perspectives (Article 12) of a specific group of children - young carers - to inform steps that can be taken to ensure this particular group is able to access the right to an education that considers and develops their personality, talents and abilities to the full (Articles 28 & 29).

### **Will there be different impacts on different groups of children and young people?**

Caring is Learning is working to test big systems change that will improve engagement in education and learning for young carers and their families to prevent and reduce future rates of poverty and trauma in Scotland. This will impact different groups of young carers in different ways.

The three Test and Learn sites will directly impact different groups of young carers aged 11 - 18 in SIMD areas 1 & 2:

- 15 - 18 year old young carers in Dundee thinking about transition plans following secondary school

- 11 year old young carers in Inverclyde who are transitioning from primary school to secondary school
- Young carers at secondary school in Renfrewshire who are working towards National Certificate exams

All three of these test sites include awareness-raising work with local schools and education/employability partners such as Skills Development Scotland to improve understanding and practice in relation to supporting young carers.

As well as those directly involved in the Test and Learn sites interventions, young carers from other services across Scotland should benefit from this learning, through these partnerships on a local level, and via the regional learning exchanges that are built into the programme.

The Young Carers Education Expert Panel will consist of young and young adult carers aged 16 – 21 from across Scotland, and this group will be empowered by directly co-producing an educational campaign for young carers and resources to support trauma-informed practice. We will recruit openly through our network to ensure representation on this group and provide travel and further support as required to assist accessibility and participation in this panel. We hope these resources will positively impact young carers across Scotland as they will be created with the help of young people with living experience and will inform and upskill educational practitioners.

The Young Carers in School Challenge is a national challenge developed from an award initiative established in England. Schools that sign up for the challenge are required to fulfil five expectations to embed the rights of young carers in education. A pilot began in March 2024 and covers five areas; Dumfries and Galloway, Argyle and Bute, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire, South Ayrshire and East Renfrewshire. Currently 78 schools have signed up for the challenge, and this is due to roll out nationally from April 2025. Although ultimately the long term aim would be that every school achieves this, the initial aim is that 60% of Scotland's schools will sign up, working towards the realisation of their right to an education that takes into account individual needs and circumstances as a young carer.

**If a negative impact is assessed for any area of rights or any group of children and young people, can you explain why this is necessary and proportionate? What options have you considered to modify the proposal, or mitigate the impact?**

To mitigate any potential negative impact on the rights of children and young people, consideration has been given to the delivery partners for the Test and Learn sites, with all being Carers Trust Network Partner members with the appropriate safeguarding procedures in place. The programme includes regular

and robust reporting, and an external evaluator that will involve young carers in the evaluation process.

The Young Carers Education Expert Panel offer is open only to 16 – 21 year olds due to safeguarding and practical considerations, but to ensure that this isn't excluding young carers below 16 from having their views equally valued, opportunities for younger carers to share their views will be considered, including the potential for peer-to-peer consultation.

### **How will the policy/measure give better or further effect to the implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland?**

The aims and outcomes of the programme are strongly linked to the educational rights of Articles 28 and 29, and on the adjustments and considerations needed to ensure these rights are met for young carers specifically. The National Carers Strategy recognises that "Education plays a unique role in identifying and supporting young carers" (Scottish Government, 2022).

This work will also provide further insight into the relationship between the UNCRC and the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. Strategic outcomes of the National Carers Strategy are that:

- Young carers are supported and protected from inappropriate caring and negative impacts on their education, social lives and future opportunities.
- Young adult carers are supported when moving from education to training and work while balancing an ongoing caring role.

By improving understanding identification in education through the Young Carers in Schools Challenge, and by trialling different approaches to targeted support for young carers, more young carers will have their rights recognised under the Act and in line with the UNCRC. It is also an opportunity to put young carers' voices at the centre of educational campaigning.

This programme will have a positive impact on children and young people rights through establishing the Young Carers Education Expert Panel which will provide a dedicated space for young carers aged 16 – 21 to express their views and feelings about education, and to have their views considered and taken seriously (Article 12).

Although Young Carers Education Expert Panel includes some young adults over the age of 18, they will be reflecting on their experiences of being a child and young carer in Scotland and therefore will be able to use their lived experience to identify areas for improvement including any times/situation where their rights were not upheld prior to the incorporation of the UNCRC.

## **How have you consulted with relevant stakeholders, including involving children and young people in the development of the policy/measure?**

The existing body of research and consultation completed by Carers Trust Scotland fed into the development of this programme.

The three test sites consulted with young people to help them shape the interventions they have put in place. These interventions are specific to each Network Partners context and the needs expressed by the young carers they work with. Staff designing and leading these interventions work regularly with young carers and took a collaborative approach to discussing their development as colleagues.

We have formed a Young Carers Education Expert Panel who will be directly involved in the development of aspects of the programme, including the co-design of resources, training and an educational campaign. Their feedback and input will be central throughout the programme.

The Young Carers Education Expert Panel will also design and run an education consultation activity at the Scottish Young Carers Festival 2025, which will reach a wider audience of young carers from across Scotland to feed into the development of the policy and influencing strategy and resources.

The Invitation to Tender of the external evaluator explicitly includes requirements to collect data from young carers and examine the impact on young people. A steering group for the programme will support the realisation of the measures and outcomes agreed.

## **What evidence have you used to inform your assessment?**

The theory of change which informed the development of this programmes used research and evidence from a range of sources.

Young carers are uniquely vulnerable in the education system and more likely to be living in poverty. Carers are 38% more likely to be from a disadvantaged background and child poverty rates were higher amongst young carers than other children based on three years pooled data for 2013/14 – 2015/16. During Young Carers Action Day 2023, 32% of young carers and young adult carers said they either 'always' or 'usually' face additional costs because they are a carer, and 57% said that they are 'always' or 'usually' worrying about the cost of living.

- Next Steps: What is the Experience of Students From a Care Background in Education. UCAS Report, 2022: [Next Steps: What is the experience of students from a care background in education? report | Undergraduate | UCAS](#)

- Child Poverty Amongst Young Carers in the UK: Prevalence and Trends in the Wake of the Financial Crisis, Economic Downturn and Onset of Austerity, 2019: [Child Poverty Amongst Young Carers in the UK: Prevalence and Trends in the Wake of the Financial Crisis, Economic Downturn and Onset of Austerity | Child Indicators Research \(springer.com\)](#)

Research demonstrates that young carers feel they are not well supported in school, with tiredness, being late and missed school-time misinterpreted as poor time management, apathy or 'difficult' behaviour, affecting engagement, attainment and life chances. Young carers miss an average of 27 school days per year.

During Young Carers Action Day 2023, 40% of young carers reported 'never' or 'not often' getting help in education to help balance caring and school, college or university work. And 33% said they either 'always' or 'usually' struggle to balance caring with school, college or university work.

At Carers Trust Scotland's annual flagship event, the Scottish Young Carers Festival (SYCF), we welcome over 500 young carers and capture their views at our 'Young Carer Consultation Zone.' In 2023, the theme was 'Support for The Future.' When asked what is one thing you would change for young carers, the majority called for greater support in schools, including greater understanding from teachers. 63% of young carers do not feel they receive support as a young carer transitioning from primary to secondary school, and 67% feel that money impacts their futures options.

When asked what key support would help them during important transitions, young carers said greater understanding and awareness from staff, greater knowledge and understanding of what support exists, greater mental health support and peer support groups during transitions with opportunities to meet other young people.

- MYTIME Young Carers: Attendance and Attainment. MYTIME, 2023: [Level Up - Attendance and Attainment 2023.pdf \(mytimeyoungcarers.org\)](#)
- Being a young carer is not a choice; it's just what we do. Carers Trust, 2023: [Young Carer Survey 2023: Being a young carer is not a choice - Carers Trust](#)
- Scottish Young Carers Festival 2023 Report. Carers Trust Scotland, 2023: [Scotland portrait Word report ARIAL FOR EXTERNAL USE \(carers.org\)](#)

Beyond school, young carers are 38% less likely to graduate and, when caring 35 hours or more a week, are 46% less likely to enter employment. However, university has a preventative effect, with graduates caring 10-19 hours per week, only 6% less likely to enter work than non-carers.

57% of young carers at the Scottish Young Carers Festival felt that being a young carer impacted their ability to get their ideal job in the future. Some responses include worry over leaving their cared for person, barriers in accessing further or higher education or difficulty in focusing due their caring role. Other responses were positive, with young carers feeling that skills they have developed from caring roles will contribute to ideal jobs in the future.

Research has outlined key interventions and solutions in supporting young carers in employment. These include off the job training, life skills training, mentoring, one to one coaching and basic skills training. Resources such as carer ID cards have also been shown to be useful to enable discreet identification.

Practitioners across the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance (a network of over 50 practitioners from every Local Authority) also shared their views at the 2023 Scottish Young Carers Festival. When asked what needs to change, they identified greater recognition and awareness, particularly in schools. Local carer services shared examples of good practice when supporting young carers to achieve their future ambitions, including group work sessions in primary and secondary schools, employability projects and one to one support through a designated employment worker.

- Advances in Life Course Research: Does providing informal care in young adulthood impact educational attainment and employment in the UK? UCL, 2023. [Does providing informal care in young adulthood impact educational attainment and employment in the UK? - ScienceDirect](#)
- Youth Employment Toolkit, Youth Futures Foundation: [Youth Employment Toolkit - Youth Futures Foundation.](#)

The Young Carers in Schools Challenge has been running in England and Wales, with evaluations demonstrating the impact this intervention can have in addressing some of the issues outlined above. An independent evaluation of the programme was carried out in 2017/2018 by Coram.

Results indicate:

- 94% of schools said staff were more likely to know what to do if they identified a young carer
- 94% of school staff had a better understanding of the support required for young carers
- 68% of schools suggested that over half of their young carers had been identified as a result of their involvement in the 'Young Carers In Schools' programme.
- 73% of schools reported young carers' classroom engagement had improved.
- 63% reported improvements in young carers' achievements.

**How will the impact of the policy/measure be monitored?**

The impact of the programme will be monitored and measured both by the Carers Trust team, including a dedicated Social Impact Manager, and by the external evaluator. Regular reports will be made to the funder, The Robertson Trust.

We will collect qualitative and quantitative monitoring data on all activities on an ongoing basis. We will evaluate our activities against project targets, looking at the impact of:

- *The three 'Test and learn' sites in Dundee, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde.*
  - Output measure will include formative evaluations such as 'test and learn' self-reports. The aim of these reports will be for services to report on activities, barriers and enablers and reflections for future work.
  - Qualitative feedback from young carers who participate in the test and learn site interventions.
  - Where possible, data relating to school attendance and attainment, and whether the young carers involved in interventions have moved on to further/higher education, training or employment.
  
- *The Young Carers in School Challenge*
  - Quantitative data on how many schools have participated
  - Tracking changes in SEEMiS recording data of young carers
  - Changes in engagement between schools and local carers services
  
- *Engagement opportunities for young carers*
  - Qualitative feedback from the Young Carers Education Expert Panel
  - Evaluation of resources co-designed by Panel by other young carers
  - Use of feedback from consultation at SYCF 2025 on shaping programme development
  
- *Learning exchange opportunities for professionals*
  - Attendance data
  - Learning exchange participant evaluations
  - Increased understanding of young carers creating an impact on practice
  - Impact of learning exchanges on further take up of the Young Carers in Schools Challenge
  
- *Trauma-informed toolkit and young carer identification resources*
  - Measuring take up of resources
  - Monitoring changing levels of identification through SEEMiS and referrals to local carers services
  - Evaluating impact on changes in practice and the integration of a trauma-informed approach
  
- *Educational campaigning*
  - Increased understanding of needs of young carers from major stakeholders
  - Policy landscape developments impacting young carers



- Feedback from young carers on the scope of the campaign and whether it reflects their input

By gathering this data we will be able to help monitor how we are helping young carers improve their wellbeing under the SHANNARI indicators. Young Carers Statements routinely make use of the SHANNARI indicator framework to evaluate the wellbeing and support needs of young carers.

- **Safe: Protected from abuse, neglect and harm by others at home, at school and in the community;**  
Young carers feel safe at school and feel safe to approach trusted adults to seek support as trauma-informed practice is embedded in education.  
*Evidenced by:* a greater number of young carers recorded on SEEMiS, support plans being put in place where needed and referrals are made to other services where appropriate.
- **Healthy: Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices;**  
Through best practice, young carers are supported during periods of educational transition (primary-secondary, beyond secondary and around key exams) to maintain their physical and mental health in a trauma-informed way that acknowledges individual needs and circumstances.  
*Evidenced by:* adoption of trauma-informed practices to identify and support young carers in school, improved wellbeing in young carers, improved attendance and engagement in school .
- **Achieving: Being supported and guided in their learning and in the development of their skills, confidence and self-esteem at home, at school and in the community;**  
Young carers are supported to achieve and develop their skills relating to their aspirations. Skills developed from caring are recognised and valued.  
*Evidenced by:* improved attendance and attainment. Sustained engagement with education and moving on to positive destinations. Culture shift within education and vocational training organisations that recognises skills gained from caring.
- **Nurtured: Having a nurturing place to live, in a family setting with additional help if needed or, where this is not possible, in a suitable care setting;**  
Young carers are supported in nurturing environments throughout their educational journey, especially at points of transition. Further support needs are identified and referrals are made to appropriate services.  
*Evidenced by:* more sustained engagement with education, improved

attendance and attainment. An embedded whole school approach to supporting young carers, that explicitly centres wellbeing and a trauma-informed approach. Further engagement with local carers services and referrals to other organisations.

- **Active: Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport which contribute to healthy growth and development, both at home and in the community;**

Young carers have opportunities to join groups and enjoy breaks from caring. They are encouraged and supported to engage in these activities. *Evidenced by:* Increased consideration by services and schools about how to support young carers to engage with recreational activities. Increased attendance at support groups. Recognition of barriers to attendance at groups, and adjustments made to remove/circumvent barriers.

- **Respected: Having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions which affect them;**

Young carers are a key voice in educational campaign and policy spaces and have the opportunity to shape national and local strategies that impact them.

*Evidenced by:* a campaign and resources co-designed by the Young Carers Education Expert Panel, improvements made to test sites in years two and three based on feedback from young carers involved, youth voice included in evaluation of Young Carers in School challenge.

- **Responsible: Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles in their schools and communities and, where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision and being involved in decisions that affect them;**

Young carers are involved in decision-making on a local and national level on subjects that impact them. The skills gained from caring are valued and recognised, and their expertise is acknowledged.

*Evidenced by:* Co-design of resources by young carers, evaluated by peers. Involvement of young carers in development of educational campaign.

- **Included: Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.**

Young carers have access to opportunities equitable to their peers and they have a full range of choices when deciding their future. The skills

gained from caring are valued and recognised. Specific support is put in place to include young carers during transitions, and structures are in place to help them find community.

*Evidenced by:* Culture shift in schools to amplify and listen to young carer voices internally. Recognition of the skills developed by caring in workplaces, education and training sectors. Opportunities are provided during transition from primary to secondary school to create a community of young carers in the new cohort.

### **How will you communicate to children and young people the impact of the policy/measure on their rights?**

We will:

- Publish this CRWIA on our website.
- Publish information about the work and progressed made on our website, in our newsletters and via social media channels.
- Work alongside local carer organisations and share impact of the work at Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance and Carers Trust Network Partner meetings.
- Share impact of work through the Young Carers Education Expert Panel and with other young carers through '*you asked, we have done*' feedback in child-friendly language.

### **Sign & Date**

Heidi Teague, Programme Officer (Education), Carers Trust Scotland - 10/02/25

Shared with Programme Steering Group - 26/03/25