

Going Higher for Student Carers: Recognition Award



Supported and funded by

Acknowledgements




This resource was originally produced by Carers Trust Scotland as an output of the Empowering Professionals to support Young Carers (EPYC) partnership project. Carers Trust Scotland is grateful to the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme for its generous support, which made this Going Higher for Student Carers Recognition Award toolkit possible. We would also like to thank the Scottish Funding Council for its generous support that has made this second edition of the toolkit possible.

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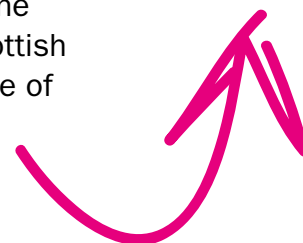
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About Carers Trust Scotland

Carers Trust Scotland is part of Carers Trust, a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, **unpaid**, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

With locally based Network Partners we are able to support carers in the community with information, advice, emotional support, hands on practical help and access to much needed breaks. We offer specialist services for carers of people of all ages and conditions and a range of individually tailored support and group activities.

Background

There are student carers in every university, trying to complete their course to the best of their ability just like their peers. However, they often experience additional challenges because of their caring responsibilities. At the time of writing, there is currently no specific data collected and disseminated in Scotland on the number of carers who are studying at universities. They are a hidden group.

Research commissioned by Carers Trust found that student carers were generally providing a very high level of care, and that:



39%

rated their physical health as either 'just ok' or 'poor'.



45%

reported having mental health problems.



56%

were experiencing difficulties because of their caring role.



16%

were concerned that they might have to drop out of university.



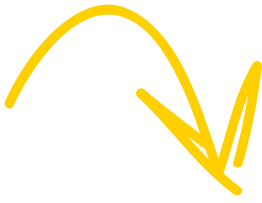
75%

of respondents informed university staff of their caring role.



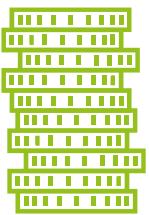
45%

said there was no-one at university who recognised them as a carer and helped them.



Student carers are four times more likely to drop out of college or university than students who are not carers.

(Sempik, J and Becker, S (2014), *Young Adult Carers at College and University* (Carers Trust) at https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/young_adult_carers_at_college_and_university.pdf).



Many student and young adult carers live on low incomes. Many student carers are juggling study, work and their caring responsibilities. They can rarely afford items beyond necessities and seldom have the opportunity to engage in student social life, unlike many of their peers.

Carers Trust Scotland's *Time to be Heard for Young Adult Carers, Bridging the Gap: Young Adult Carers in Scotland 2015* report (Carers.org/sites/files/carerstrust/ttbh_scotland_report_-_final.pdf) highlighted recommendations for improved identification and support for student carers.



Carers Trust Scotland's Going Higher for Student Carers in Scotland initiative (Carers.org/going-higher-scotland) is calling for all universities to:

- **Identify** the number of student carers attending or hoping to study at their institution.
- **Support** all student carers throughout their education to ensure they maintain good health, complete their course and achieve the best grades possible.
- **Report** on student carer progressions and showcase student carers' achievements.



The Going Higher for Student Carers Recognition Award in Scotland

This award is only available to universities operating in Scotland. Universities in the rest of the UK should email Carers Trust at info@carers.org to find out about initiatives in their nations.



What is the Going Higher for Student Carers: Recognition Award?

This award aims to make it easier for universities to support student carers and reward good practice. It incentivises and encourages universities to adopt a sustainable, whole institution approach to **identify**, **support** and **report** on student carers.



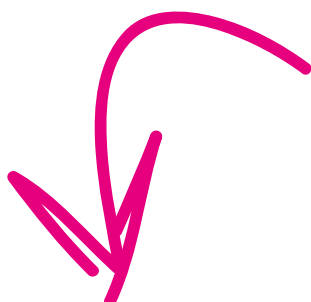
There is no cost in undertaking the award process. By taking part, universities will have access to the application process for the Going Higher for Student Carers: Recognition Award, enabling universities to potentially gain recognition from Carers Trust Scotland for effective practice. They will be supported by Carers Trust Scotland staff to make the process as straightforward as possible.

By coming on this journey, universities will send a positive message to student carers that they are recognised, supported and will be given a fair chance to be successful in their institution. They will also make it clear to other institutions and to the wider student body that inclusivity and fairness is at the heart of its institution.



About carers

A carer is anyone who cares, **unpaid**, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.



Principles into action

Carers Trust Scotland promotes an inclusive approach to student carer developments in higher education institutions, including when creating or reviewing policies and procedures.

This award encourages consultation, participation and a holistic review of carer provision. However, changes will only come about if universities commit to implement and promote the award to make a real difference to the lives of carers. Development of carer support needs should be embedded into day-to-day practices to ensure these are effective. It is also important to have robust reporting and evaluation procedures. Like all new processes, Carers Trust Scotland encourages carer support developments to be monitored closely, and amendments made to ensure that they are successful.



The Going Higher for Student Carers: Recognition Award consists of three separate principles. To gain the award universities will need to demonstrate that they are fulfilling and championing the following three principles:

- 1. Identify:** Carers are being proactively identified and awareness is being raised throughout the university.
- 2. Support:** Carers are being supported to give them a fair chance to be successful in their studies.
- 3. Report:** Student carer progressions are showcased and evaluation tools are used to celebrate achievements and make improvements.



The award is points based and in order to gain the award an institution must demonstrate that it has achieved 70 points, which is 70% of the total criteria points (100 points) available for the award.


Our points weighting structure can be found under the Award criteria section on page 9 of this guidance. Once a university has achieved its award we intend to review this every two years.

Applying for the award

To qualify for the award, a university must supply evidence to show how it is fully implementing each principle. Each application will be reviewed by a panel made up of Carers Trust Scotland, student carers and other partners.

Carers Trust Scotland is able to work with any institution that has applied and has not fulfilled enough of the criteria to receive the award, to assist it in strengthening its future submission. Carers Trust Scotland will respond to all institutions that submit an application – both those who have and have not successfully fulfilled the criteria for the award – to suggest ways to further improve student carer support.

Submitting evidence:



To apply for the award, applicants will need to complete the submission checklist which can be found at **Carers.org/going-higher-student-carers-recognition-award**.

Please remember to:

- Tick the relevant box on the submission checklist to show which criteria the university has submitted evidence for.
- Write a brief description of the evidence provided in the boxes on the submission checklist.
- Ensure that all evidence submitted is anonymised, with no identifiable factors for any carer or other person.

The application should be submitted on a USB stick/CD in electronic format, including a completed signed submission checklist and each piece of evidence should be labelled with the criteria number, university name and description (for example – 1.1 University of Carers, Pre-baseline survey) and posted to:



**FAO Going Higher for
Student Carers Initiative
Office 64
Spaces
Tay House
300 Bath Street
Glasgow G2 4JR**

We regret that we cannot accept applications via email.

Your privacy

We promise to keep your personal details safe. You can change how we contact you at any time by contacting us at dpo@carers.org or 0300 772 9600. To see how we protect and use your personal data read our Privacy Policy at Carers.org/privacy-policy.

Further information

If you have any queries about the application process, please get in touch with Carers Trust Scotland. Call 0300 772 7701 or email scotland@carers.org.



The award process

Get in touch with Carers Trust Scotland to find out more about the award process.

Review the university's existing student carer support provision.

Develop any new student carer support provision, as deemed necessary.

Collect relevant award criteria evidence and complete the application process.

Submit award application.

You will be notified of the date of when the next panel session will take place to assess submitted applications.

Carers Trust Scotland will be in touch no later than two weeks after the panel meeting regarding the outcome of the submitted application.



Award criteria

Below we have provided information about the different award criteria and made some suggestions about possible evidence sources, and the weight given to each award criteria area. Evidence is not restricted to these suggestions and we welcome and encourage universities to demonstrate other evidence sources.

Points available for each criteria area will only be awarded on the extent to which it has been demonstrated that these criteria have been fulfilled. Full available points for each criteria field will only be awarded when the institution has fully demonstrated that it has exceeded the criteria.

Principle 1 – Identify

Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
1.1 Pre-baseline survey completed	<p>This will provide the university with an opportunity to reflect on its understanding of student carer issues and consider its provision of support for student carers at the start of the process.</p> <p>The interactive Pre-baseline survey can be accessed at: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GoingFurtherandGoingHigherPre-baselineSurvey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of completed Pre-baseline survey. • Confirmation email of completed Pre-baseline survey. 	1
1.2 Carers Support Working Group established	<p>A group appointed to review student carer identification and support at the university and make recommendations to improve such support.</p> <p>Carers Trust Scotland would advise a full institution approach to the Carers Support Working Group and encourages cross-departmental representation; including management team, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and student body representation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job titles of those on the Carers Support Working Group. • Evidence that the Carers Support Working Group has been established, and the opportunity to participate, has been promoted to university staff and the student body. 	2

Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
1.3 Carers Support Working Group meeting(s) and remit	<p>The frequency and duration of meetings will be dependent on the aims and remit of the group.</p> <p>A Terms of Reference for the group may help to clarify the remit and purpose.</p> <p>Carers Trust Scotland would advise that the Carers Support Working Group meetings take place biannually.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas, Minutes and Actions. • Copy of the Terms of Reference for the Carers Support Working Group. • Statements from members expressing their experience as a member. 	3
1.4 Carer definition established	<p>A definition is established and endorsed by the university which clearly explains the university's understanding of who is an unpaid carer.</p> <p>Carers Trust Scotland encourages institutions to adopt the Carers Trust definition: 'A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or relative who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the university's carer definition. • Screenshot or link to the definition of a carer on the university's website or Student Carers Support Policy. 	1
1.5 Statement of Intent to Support Carers	<p>A short statement highlighting what the institution's ethos, approach and commitments are to supporting student carers (please see Carers Trust Scotland's guidance for more information at Carers.org/sites/default/files/media/guidance_on_statement_of_intent.pdf).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of Statement of Intent to Support Carers. • Screenshot or link to the Statement on the university's website. • Evidence of widely promoting the Statement of Intent across the university. • Evidence of promoting the Statement of Intent to relevant external stakeholders. 	1

Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
1.6 Widening access/ participation includes carers	Carers are listed as a prioritised group in the university's Widening Access/Participation Strategy to ensure additional support is available to improve carers' successful participation at the university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the university's Widening Access or Widening Participation Strategy or statement. • Screenshot or link to the university's listing of carers as a widening access or widening participation priority group on its website. • Evidence of widening access or widening participation support information specifically developed for carers. 	4
1.7 Contextualised admissions highlights carers	<p>Carers are highlighted as a priority group under contextualised admissions procedures and policies.</p> <p>Through undertaking unpaid caring responsibilities, carers can gain many transferable skills, knowledge and qualities. However, time spent caring can negatively impact on their education attainment and this could result in them not meeting basic entry requirements.</p> <p>UCAS has a question that has allowed applicants to disclose their caring role on postgraduate applications since June 2018. It is looking to introduce the question on undergraduate applications from 2020, for applicants looking to begin courses in 2021. Although there is currently no formal mechanism for self-identification in the UCAS undergraduate application, student carers can be identified through information given in the personal statement and reference. However, many people with unpaid caring responsibilities do not recognise themselves as a carer and this can present a barrier for self-identification of carer status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the university's contextualised admissions policy and procedures. • Screenshot or link of carers as a contextualised admissions priority group on its website. • Evidence of admissions support information specifically developed for carers. 	3



Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
1.8 Annual enrolment or matriculation identification	<p>Asking students annually about their unpaid caring status does not only provide data to inform the university about the carer demographic in the student body, but also helps to tailor personalised and relevant support.</p> <p>Anyone can become an unpaid carer at any stage in their life and their caring status can change over time. Also, a student's caring role may end during their time at university.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the university's annual enrolment or matriculation form(s), and the inclusion of a method for carers to identify themselves. • Data report of the number of student carers at the university in the current academic year, and possible trends compared to previous academic years; or projections for future academic years. 	3
1.9 Student carer applicants identified	<p>Putting systems in place to proactively identify carer applicants could result in adequate support being in place for the student entering the institution and this could give the carer a fairer chance to be successful in their studies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and designation of carers lead for candidate enquiries and link or screenshot of where this contact and support information is available on the university website. • Evidence that courses administered by the university – such as most postgraduate courses – enquire about carer status on the application form. • Copy of posters developed to encourage student carers to disclose caring status. • Evidence of admissions support information specifically developed for carers. 	3

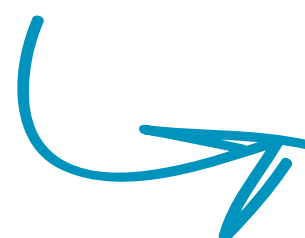
Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
1.10 Student carers at the university identified	<p>Having systems in place to actively enquire about the caring responsibilities of existing students could enable appropriate support to be offered and the students may be less likely to get to crisis point because of juggling study and their caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Carers Trust Scotland advocates for universities to be able to identify student carers at all points in their academic journey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of posters and leaflets on campus targeting student carers. • Evidence that the university has a dedicated information and support section of the website for carers. • Evidence of an internal flagging system, which includes a student carer flagging option. 	2
1.11 Confirming carer status of students	<p>By establishing recognised and flexible criteria for students to confirm their unpaid caring status, the university can make it easier for carers to come forward and disclose that status.</p> <p>Carers Trust Scotland would advocate that self-identification is the best means to allow students to identify their caring status as it presents the least barriers for them to disclose as an unpaid carer.</p> <p>But this might also include a carer's identification or authorisation card, carer service letter, a letter from a GP surgery or a copy of the student's young carer statement or adult carer plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of accepted carer status criteria. • Copy of Student Carer Support Policy with carer status criteria highlighted. • Screenshot or link to the university's information about affirming carer status of applicants or enrolled students. 	2
Total			25



Principle 2 – Support

Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
2.1 Named carers lead	By establishing a named carers lead contact the university can make it easier for prospective and current student carers to come forward and make enquiries and access support and information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name and designation of carers lead for carer enquiries and information. Link or screenshot of where carers lead contact and support information is accessible on the university website. Evidence in Student Carers Support Policy of a carers lead. 	1
2.2 Action Plan	A student carer Action Plan should highlight the actions that the institution is committed to take forward to improve student carer identification and support (please see Carers Trust Scotland's guidance for more information at Carers.org/sites/default/files/media/student_carer_action_plan_0.pdf).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of the Action Plan. 	4
2.3 Student Carers Policy	<p>A holistic overarching policy for the university should clearly explain practice and procedures for identifying, supporting and reporting on carers.</p> <p>Such policies can include specific detail around many areas including definition, confirming status, admissions, widening access and participation, enrolment and matriculation, absence, extenuating circumstances and student services (please see Carers Trust Scotland's guidance for more information at Carers.org/sites/default/files/media/guidance_for_student_carers_policy_4.pdf).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of Student Carers Support Policy. 	6

Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
2.4 Student Carers Support Policy launched	A public launch of the Student Carer Support Policy can help promote it. Ideas for launching could include a Carers Week event in June or one on Carers Rights Day at the end of November; online promotion or information sharing via all student and staff email.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of launch of Student Carers Support Policy – such as photographs, screenshot of online posts, copies of email communications or copies of press release distributed. 	3
2.5 Other relevant policies and strategies	Relevant policies should make explicit and direct reference to carers and their specific considerations and support needs. Such policies and strategies may include, but are not limited to, anti-bullying, equality and diversity, widening access and participation policies/strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that university policies make specific references to, and account of, carers and their needs. 	2
2.6 Publications and resources	Creating your own or making others specific publications and resources for student carers, such as leaflets and posters, which can help promote support for carers, reach out to carers and improve identification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies of publications and resources developed. Evidence of how these have been promoted and displayed. 	3
2.7 Website information	Having a dedicated webpage can provide details about student carer support and other information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link or screenshot of the dedicated carer section on the university website. Evidence of raising awareness of the webpage to student carers. 	3



Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
2.8 Acknowledging carers	Regular promotional activities or events are a great way to recognise the contribution that student carers make to your institution or to raise awareness of the needs and ambitions of carers too. This could be for example, a campus carer awareness campaign, a Carers Week event or a fundraising stunt for a local or national carer service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of activities undertaken to acknowledge carers. • Emails and posters promoting events. • Social media screenshots highlighting activities. • Photographs of activities/ events. • Testimonies of participants. • Activity/event reports. 	4
2.9 Referral and signposting	Establishing procedures and protocols for referring or signposting student carers to relevant support services can make it easier for carers to get support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership agreement(s). • Evidence of signposting arrangements. 	3
2.10 Student Association(s') participation	Student Association(s') active participation can play a key role in universities planning for identifying, supporting and reporting on carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of Action Plan specifically listing Student Association(s') involvement and actions. • Student Association(s') Student Carer Support Policy. • Evidence of Student Association(s') membership on Carers Support Working Group. 	4
2.11 Links to carer services	By establishing working and collaborative relationships with carer services in the local area the university can open up access and support for its student carers body and encourage local carers to apply to university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the university engaging with local carer service events. • Evidence of carer services attending university events such as fresher fairs. 	3
2.12 Promoting local, national and UK wide carer services	The university promotes carer services. For example, displaying carer services posters and adding links on the website to Carers Trust Scotland, and other relevant carer support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs of posters on display. • Link or screenshot of carer services promotion, or weblinks on the university website. 	2

Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
2.13 Basic student carer awareness training taken up by university staff	Relevant staff at the university, including senior management, teaching staff and non-teaching staff engage in Carers Trust Scotland student carer basic awareness training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of evaluation forms. • Registration or participant forms. • Photographs of training being delivered. • Correspondence promoting training. 	5
2.14 Advanced student carer training taken up by university staff	Relevant staff at the university, including senior management, teaching staff and non-teaching staff engage in Carers Trust Scotland student carer advanced training module.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of evaluation forms. • Registration or participant forms. • Photographs of training being delivered. • Correspondence promoting training. 	4
2.15 Student carer training made mandatory for university staff – teaching and non-teaching	<p>University demonstrates leadership to ensure staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence to identify, support and report on student carers by engaging in continued professional development in this area.</p> <p>New staff to the university are required to take part in the basic awareness training on student carers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email correspondence communicating mandatory status. • Copy of policy or continued professional development plans that indicate mandatory status. 	3
Total			50



Principle 3 – Report

Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
3.1 Data	<p>Data gathered on student carers at the university should be shared with staff, the student body, Carers Trust Scotland and other relevant organisations such as Scottish Funding Council.</p> <p>Attention should be paid to collection and analysis of data as outlined in Outcome Agreement criteria set between the university and Scottish Funding Council in relation to student carers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of data report. • Evidence on how this data has been communicated. • Evidence of how this data is being used to shape or influence policy and practice. 	4
3.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	<p>How is data gathered on student carers contributing to the university meeting its KPIs either at institutional or departmental/ faculty levels? What impact is being able to identify, support and report on student carers making to the university?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of relevant meetings and agendas. • Strategy documents. • Business plans. • Monitoring and evaluation reports. • Case studies or testimonies. 	3
3.3 Outcome Agreement between the university and Scottish Funding Council	<p>Outcome agreement guidance disseminated to universities during October 2018 for University Outcome Agreements: 2019–20 and 2021–22 (points 98 to 100 on page 34) states that universities should improve the support to staff and carers with unpaid caring responsibilities as well as using the Carers Trust Scotland definition of a carer. It also urges all universities to fully support and participate in the Going Higher for Student Carers Recognition Award.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of relevant section of Outcome Agreement plan or Outcome Agreement monitoring report related to carers. • Email or letter of commitment from the university to Carers Trust Scotland stating its participation in the Going Higher for Student Carers Recognition Award framework. • Copy of Student Carers Support Policy or link to university website which includes a definition of how the university defines a carer. 	5

Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
3.4 Going Higher for Student Carers Recognition Award journey	Promoting and reporting on the university's journey in undertaking the award is good awareness raising activity and assists in showcasing the good policy and practice that the university embodies to identify and support student carers to a range of stakeholders. This could be promoted across the campus to students and staff as well as relevant local and national organisations or institutions, and other relevant partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence on how the journey has been communicated. • Copy of all staff email. • Copy of all student email. • Link or screenshot to website promotion. • Link or screenshot to social media promotion. 	4
3.5 Showcasing the Student Carers Action Plan	Your Action Plan should be a live document. Promoting the university's intended actions for student carers and the difference these actions are making, is a great way to raise awareness and enhance stakeholder engagement. Promotion also raises the profile and furthers the reputation of the University. This could be achieved through the production of a summary document which is widely circulated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of how the Action Plan has been showcased. • Evidence of how the action plan is making a difference. 	2
3.6 Promoting Student Carers Support Policy	The Student Carers Support Policy should be widely promoted and accessible to staff, students and relevant organisations. Having an easy read version or in different formats is also another way to ensure that it is accessible to student carers from a range of backgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of all student email. • Copy of all staff email. • Copy of external communications promoting the policy. • Copy of easy read version or alternative formats. • Link or screenshot of website promotion. • Link or screenshot of social media promotion. 	2

Criteria	Description and information	Possible evidence	Possible points available
3.7 Carers Support Working Group review	The group should have established ongoing monitoring and evaluation plans. This could include the Action Plan and remit, and impact of the group. It is important to know what difference the working group and action plan are making to student carers and the university more widely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of reviewing structures in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Carers Support Working Group. 	4
3.8 Post-baseline survey completed	<p>The completed Post-baseline survey will provide the university with an opportunity to critically reflect on its understanding of student carers' issues now that it has taken part in the Going Higher for Student Carers Recognition Award journey. It will enable the university to consider its successes, its learning and future areas for improvement regarding the provision of support for student carers at the time of portfolio submission.</p> <p>The interactive Post-baseline survey can be accessed at: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GoingFurtherandGoingHigherPost-baselineSurvey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of completed Post-baseline survey. Confirmation email of completed Post-baseline survey. 	1
Total			25

Notes





supporting
student carers in
higher education

Carers Trust Scotland

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Email: scotland@carers.org

Carers.org
<https://professionals.carers.org>



www.facebook.com/carers



www.twitter.com/CarersTrustScot



www.youtube.com/user/CarersTrust



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