

Response to the National Care Service Consultation on behalf of young carers

About Carers Trust Scotland and Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance

Carers Trust Scotland is part of Carers Trust, a major charity for, with and about unpaid 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 support unpaid carers in the community with information, advice, emotional support, hands on practical help and access to much needed breaks. We offer specialist services for unpaid carers of people of all ages and conditions and a range of individually tailored support and group activities.

The Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance (SYCSA) is a network of young carers services across Scotland and one of the National Carer Organisations. The SYCSA is hosted by Carers Trust Scotland. Currently there are 41 members providing direct support to young carers.

Background

Carers Trust Scotland and SYCSA, as National Carer Organisations (NCO's) have contributed to the joint NCO submission. This submission will therefore concentrate on the views and data we have collected specifically from young carers. We have included in our response, information and evidence gathered through a series of methods, including survey, polling and a bespoke young carers workshop at the Carers Parliament in October 2021.

Due to the length of the consultation document and vast coverage of social care in the proposals, it was not possible for us to gather the views of young carers in all aspects of what is being proposed. For the purpose of engaging young carers, we focussed on specific areas of the National Care Service consultation which we think are most pertinent to most young carers. We used the National Care Service for Scotland Consultation easy read version to engage these children and young people.

To assist young carers to be informed of and understand the proposals in the National Care Service consultation, we also created a briefing paper for young carers on the key areas that we identified in the consultation:

<https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NCO-Briefing-on-NCS-for-Young-Carers-FINAL.pdf>. This briefing was circulated widely to young carers connected with us, across all carer services in Scotland and also to other youth organisations. Information on the consultation and the briefing was also promoted widely on our social media channels – Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Survey overview

In September 2021, we disseminated a survey for young carers to share their thoughts on the National Carer Service consultation. The survey was circulated among members of SYCSA to be shared with the young carers they work with. The survey was also shared widely on our social media channels.

Fourteen young people responded to the online survey, representing twelve of Scotland's Local Authorities.

Answer Choices	Responses
Under 12	1
13	1
14	1
15	4
16	3
17	2
18	2
Total	14

While this is not a representative sample of young carers in Scotland, the responses are suggestive of the position of young carers on key sections of the National Care Service consultation.

Rights to breaks from caring

Young carers were asked in the survey:

- It is important that unpaid carers of all ages are able to take a break. Scottish Government want to make it an unpaid carer's Right to have a break. What model of breaks from caring would you prefer?*

Answer Choices	Response Percent
All unpaid carers have the same support to take a break	21%
All support should be personalised to a person's needs	28%
It should be a mix of both	50%

Opportunities for respite are important to all unpaid carers, including young and young adult carers. It is important to young people that respite and breaks are available, and suitable to their needs. Each young carer has different expectations of

a break; and different requirements for what makes a good break for them. This is reflected in the answers to the survey, and in the following quotes:

“I want to spend more time 1:1 with my mum and dad ... I don’t feel confident enough to go with people I don’t know. I want my breaks to be with my own friends and family and with people I choose ... If my mum and dad got more help with my sister this would help me too.”

“For a lot of young carers – a break away is not just physical but a mental break – don’t need to worry in the back of their mind about the person they care for. Even if attending a hub (physical break) there is not necessarily a mental break. Helps for them to know the cared for person is safe and being looked after by someone.”

National Care Service

Young carers were asked in the survey:

2. A National Care Service would mean that the Scottish Government would become responsible for social care, like it is for health care. Do you think Scottish Government should be responsible for social care?

Answer Choices	Response Percent
Yes	86%
No	14%



Young carers could also take part in an Instagram poll and share their view in a quick response. 16 people took part in this Instagram poll, with 100% responding ‘Yes’.

Young people can see the potential for a National Care Service to improve the support available both to unpaid carers, and the person(s) they care for.

Young carers noted that support available is different across Scotland’s local authorities. Young carers expressed that a National Care Service could have a role in standardising the support available, ensuring high quality provision regardless of location.

Young carers also shared their views with us on this topic during a young carers’ session during the Carers Parliament, where seven out of eight participants supported that Scottish Government should be responsible for the delivery of social care.

1. Do you think the Scottish Government should be responsible for the delivery of social care?



100% of respondents to the question “Should this be through a National Care Service?”, agreed that the delivery of social care should be through a National Care Service.

Young carers thoughts are reflected in the following comments also:

“All care and support should be person centred. The person receiving care is the most important in all of this and should have the right to voice opinions on their care and feel listened to when they speak up.”

“I think that there should be help for everyone across the entire of the UK and extra help in rural areas.”

Valuing people who work in social care

Young carers were asked in the survey:

3. *Scotland’s health and social care workforce provide important support to people across Scotland every day. Do you think that there should be better pay and working conditions for social care workers in Scotland?*

Answer Choices	Response Percent
Yes	100%
No	0%



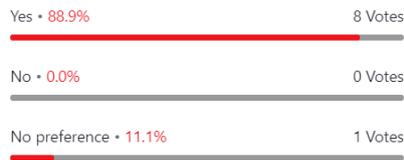
Young carers could also take part in an Instagram poll and share their views in a quick response. 15 people took part in this poll, with 100% responding ‘Yes’.

Young carers value the role and work of social care staff. Some of them have social care workers in their families; others who are part of a young carer project and have relationships with the workers at their carers centre, see social care workers directly benefiting their lives.

Young carers might also have social care involvement in their lives, through social care provisions for them or the person(s) they care for. Young carers value the support that this gives the person(s) they care for, and the wider family.

Young carers highlighted that social care should be connected with other local and national services, providing wrap around support. Joint working and clear communication between services is considered key in providing excellent support.

Should the National Care Service take action to make pay, working condition, and training and development for social care workers better?



During our young carer session at the Carers Parliament, young carers also had the opportunity to share their views via polls. The majority of respondents believed that there should be better pay, working conditions and training and development for the social care workforce.

Young carers thoughts are reflected in the following comments also:

“My nana is an emergency response carer for health and social care Scotland through the night and her job is very difficult, I think she deserves to be paid well for it as it is not an easy job.”

“Both paid and unpaid carers should not be living in poverty or relying on food banks.”

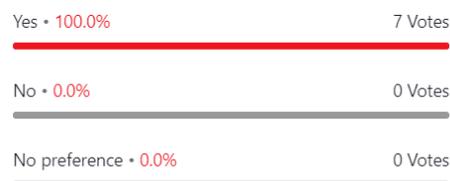
“All unpaid carers should receive some money, they are seen as providing vital help, so everyone should receive something.”

“I believe the National Care Service really has to value the role of paid carers and other healthcare staff and must prioritise their wages and working conditions. This would be key to supporting unpaid carers with their role.”

Incorporation of Children’s Services

We did not ask young carers their views on incorporating Children’s Services into a National Care Service as part of our Survey or Instagram Polling. However, we did gather views through our workshop at the Carers Parliament.

Do you agree that children’s services should be covered in the National Care Service?



Through a digital poll during the session young carers were asked whether Children’s Services should be within the National Care Service, 100% of respondents agreed that it should be.

However, some young carers did have some reservations about this, particularly around the fear that a National Care Service may result in a dilution of quality services and practice that is currently operating in some areas.

Young carers thoughts are reflected in the following comments:

“I’m in two minds with that one because each local area has so many different things to offer and if we generalise, will that be lost.”

“I feel that each individual is so different even if their situation is the same. One 12 year old may be very mature and need different levels of support than a less mature 12 year old. If support is generalized, it may not be appropriate for each person if that makes sense?”

“I see some potential benefits such as the improvement for communication between services.”

Conclusion

Although not unanimous, the vast majority of young carers we engaged with are supportive of the introduction of a National Care Service and for Scottish Government to be responsible for the delivery of social care. The young carers who took part in our consultation opportunities also agreed that Children’s Services should be incorporated into the National Care Service.

It was also clear that these young carers think that there should be better pay and working conditions for social care workers in Scotland.

In relation to short breaks, a mixed approach between standardised and personalised support was identified as the preferred option.

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