

CARERS TRUST SCOTLAND STUDENT CARER SUPPORT POLICY TEMPLATE GUIDANCE

Purpose:

This document demonstrates a proposed layout for a Student Carers Support Policy for a Further and Higher Education institution. For each section there are a series of questions or suggestive points that your institution may want to include in your customised Student Carers Support Policy.

These questions and suggestions under each of the proposed sections will enable your institution to develop a robust and holistic policy, which would also meet the criteria set out in the Going Further and Going Higher for Student Carers Recognition Award delivered by Carers Trust Scotland.

The guidance and layout demonstrated in this document is purely suggestive as each institution has sole responsibility for creating its Student Carers Support Policy – both in layout and content – via its own decision-making bodies; and therefore, responsible for ensuring that such a policy reflects its institutional dynamics in ways that are workable for its student carers, staff and other relevant stakeholders.

To assist your institution in developing a Student Carers Support Policy it might be worthwhile looking at some examples such as that of:

Aberdeen University: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/student-carers-2038.php>

Glasgow Caledonia University:
<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/studentlife/healthandwellbeing/studentwellbeing/stucarer/>

Queen Margaret University:
<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/support-for-student-carers/>

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[UNIVERSITY NAME AND LOGO]

STUDENT CARER SUPPORT POLICY

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Section One - Introduction:

- ✓ Explain who this policy provides advice and guidance to - is it students and/or university staff?
- ✓ Define what your institution constitutes as a student carer [we advise using and endorsing the definition of Carers Trust Scotland i.e. anyone who cares, unpaid, for a family member or friend who due to illness, disability, frailty, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support].

Section Two - Scope of the Policy:

- ✓ Who does this policy cover – both prospective and current students who have an unpaid caring responsibility?
- ✓ Will this policy cover them at any time leading up to and during their studies? Will the policy take account of unpredictability in terms of commitment, consistency and time scales that reflect the lived experiences of unpaid carers?
- ✓ Does the policy recognise the unique and specific individual needs of each student carer, and that caring responsibilities can fluctuate over time and intensity?
- ✓ Who does the policy not cover e.g. students with parental responsibilities (unless for a child with a disability), or those employed in a caring capacity?

Section Three - Policy Statement:

- ✓ What is it that your institution is committed to providing for student carers?
- ✓ How does this align with your institution's mission/vision/values?
- ✓ What approach will be taken with student carers e.g. non-judgemental and sensitive approach; and enabling informed choices and consent?

Section Four - Equality and Diversity Statement:

- ✓ How does this policy endorse/reflect/embolden your institutions culture/processes/values?
- ✓ How is it related to inclusivity, widening participation/access, equal opportunities, tackling inequality, valuing diversity?
- ✓ How does it connect with your institutional responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act (2010) e.g. preventing discrimination by association of someone

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with a protected characteristic (in the case of student carers this may be related to age and disability)?

- ✓ Has your policy undergone an Equality Impact Assessment?
- ✓ Does your institution list carers in your widening access strategy?

Section Five - Contextualised Admissions:

- ✓ Does your institution make contextualised offers to student carers, particularly young carers i.e. young person under aged 18 who provides unpaid care?
- ✓ How does this relate to your Contextualised Admissions Policy?

Section Six - Disclosure and Confirming Carers Status:

- ✓ Who does a student need to disclose/declare their caring status at your institution?
- ✓ Is this part of your admissions process or a separate process?
- ✓ Does your institution collect data through admissions/matriculation?
- ✓ Can disclosure take place at any point during a student's studies?
- ✓ Which sources of evidence will a student need to provide to disclose their carer status i.e. is self-declaration enough or does your institution require other evidence? For example, GP letter; local authority carers assessment/adult carers support plan/young carers statement; young carers authorisation card; other documentation such as a letter from a carers-centre or other professional?
- ✓ When a student declares their caring status what happens with this information? What processes are activated because of this?
- ✓ Who leads on contacting student carers regarding this e.g. Student Advisor or Widening Access team?
- ✓ Do you have a named contact for student carers?
- ✓ Who is the first point of contact for undergraduate and postgraduate student carers? Can this be an academic?
- ✓ Will the student carer be offered a Student Carer Plan? Where is this stored? Who has access to this?

Section Seven - Student Carer Plan:

- ✓ If you decide to create and implement a student carer plan what will this be used for? What information should it capture?

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- ✓ How will you ensure that the student carer is actively involved in shaping, influencing, contributing and reviewing this?
- ✓ Will this be a specific person-centred plan unique to the student carer?
- ✓ Who will have access to the student carer plan? How does this align with GDPR?

Section Eight - Implications for Study:

In this section your institution may want to cover areas such as:

- ✓ **Assessments and examinations:**
 - Will options be available for student carers who experience increased caring responsibilities leading up to or during an examination period, which may impact on their ability to engage with assessment deadlines or exams?
- ✓ **Withdrawal from or Suspension of Studies:**
 - What is the process for a student to decide and to implement any decision to take a break from their studies, and for how long?
 - Will consideration be given to academic requirements of the student's course?
 - What should a student do or who should they contact if there are changes needing made to their withdrawal or suspension?
 - Is extension of overall registration possible?
- ✓ **Absence and Timekeeping:**
 - If a student carer requires taking time off due to caring responsibilities will measures be put in place to allow the student adequate opportunity to make up missed time? For example, through access to missed materials, rescheduled activities or accessing materials through a range of methods such as lectures, tutorials, virtual platforms.
 - If there is going to be periods of absence due to caring responsibilities who should be notified? Will such periods of absence be recorded as authorised absence?
 - Will your institution recognise the need for student carers to arrive late or leave early so that they can place their cared for person(s) in appropriate daytime care?
- ✓ **Timetabling:**
 - Will your institution issue course timetables in advance to student carers, wherever possible, so that student carers can make necessary alternative care arrangements?
 - Will your institution recognise that such students may not be able to attend academic activities in the event of late changes to timetables?

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- ✓ **Regular contact with Student Advisor:**
 - Will this be a requirement, especially if there is a live Student Carer Plan?
- ✓ **Resuming Studies:**
 - Will an appropriate return to study meeting be provided?
 - Will the Student Carer Plan be updated to reflect new realities of unpaid caring responsibilities?
 - If they are returning from course withdrawal what is the process?
 - Is going from full-time to part-time study an option; if so how should this be done?
- ✓ **Financial considerations/support:**
 - What scholarships or bursaries are available to student carers from your institution?
 - What about SAAS funding support?
 - If a student carer withdraws or suspends studies what are the financial implications of this regarding tuition fees and bursaries?
 - Who should they contact in relation to this? Links to websites or relevant documents?
- ✓ **External placements:**
 - Will plenty of notice be given to student carers?
 - Will student carers be given priority in relation to reasonable travelling distance to accommodate care arrangements and their unpaid caring responsibilities?
- ✓ **Academic Standards:**
 - Will precautions be taken to ensure that support provided to each student carer will not impact on their ability to meet the required academic outcomes?
 - If requests for support are rejected who will make this decision and will the rationale of this be communicated to the student in writing with enough detail and advice regarding suitably approved support?
- ✓ **Mitigating Circumstances:**
 - Is the Student Carer Plan a tool to reduce mitigating circumstances, so that 'mitigating circumstances' are hopefully not required?
 - Can the Student Carer Plan be used, or not used, as evidence in a mitigating circumstances application?

Section Nine - Other Support Services:

- ✓ What support service details are accessible to student carers?
- ✓ These could be within your institution such as student services; counselling services and chaplaincy. They could also be external to your institution; such as Carers Trust Scotland, local carer services; mental health organisations.
- ✓ This section could be a short directory of organisational names, telephone numbers and/or website addresses.
- ✓ Does your institution have a specific webpage for student carers and access to online signposting services?

Section Ten - Complaints:

- ✓ What is the complaints procedure if a student carer is dissatisfied with:
 - Arrangements offered by your institution?
 - How their information has been handled/used?
 - Or in the event they have experienced a negative interaction with a staff member in relation to this policy?
- ✓ [This section could include a link to a webpage or document of your Complaints Handling Procedure].