

# Time to be Heard for Young Adult Carers

Bridging the Gap: Young Adult  
Carers in Scotland



---

# Acknowledgements

---

We would like to thank all the young adult carers, organisations and Carers Trust Scotland's Network Partners involved in the Time to be Heard campaign. Particular thanks goes to those young adult carers who lent us their voices for this report.

We are grateful to the University of Nottingham for carrying out the research, which is the primary focus for this report. We would also like to thank The Co-operative for its generous support.

Report author: Paul Traynor

Carers Trust Scotland  
Skypark 3, Suite 1/2  
14–18 Elliot Place  
Glasgow G3 8EP

Tel: 0300 123 2008  
Email: [scotland@carers.org](mailto:scotland@carers.org)

[www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)  
[www.youngcarersmatter.org](http://www.youngcarersmatter.org)  
[www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net)  
<http://professionals.carers.org>  
[www.carershub.org](http://www.carershub.org)

Carers Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1145181) and in Scotland (SC042870). Registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 7697170. Registered office: 32–36 Loman Street, London SE1 0EH.

© Carers Trust 2015

---

# Contents

---

<a href="#">Executive summary</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Life for young adult carers</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Beyond the caring role</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Making life better for young adult carers through action</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Conclusion: It is young adult carers' Time to be Heard</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Key recommendations to better support young adult carers in Scotland</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">References</a>	<a href="#">19</a>

---

# Executive summary

---

Young adult carers are bridging the gap when a family member or friend needs care. Young adult carers aged 14–25 dedicate their time to caring – **unpaid** – for someone who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.

This is generally while they are in a period of transition themselves; coming to the end of their time at school, moving on to college or university, starting their working lives and taking their first steps on the pathway to adulthood.

## The research

In 2013 Carers Trust commissioned research undertaken by the University of Nottingham to inform our Time to be Heard for Young Adult Carers campaign, made possible by funding from The Co-operative Charity of the Year.

An online survey collected responses from 295 young adult carers across the UK. The findings, by Dr Joe Sempik and Professor Saul Becker of Young Carers International, the University of Nottingham, were published by Carers Trust as the following reports:

- Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education (2013).
- Young Adult Carers and Employment (2014).
- Young Adult Carers at College and University (2014).

Young adult carers surveyed in this study were all caring for a family member and most often caring for their mother (52%). Although, respondents were also commonly providing care for their father (14%), a brother or stepbrother (17%), a sister or stepsister (8%), both parents (4%) or other family members. Those family members needing care had a wide range of conditions; most commonly physical disabilities, mental health problems and long-term physical illnesses. The majority of respondents were providing high or very high levels of care.

The survey included responses from more female young adult carers (78% of respondents) than male young adult carers. Other research has found that there are more female carers than male carers (Scotland's Census, 2011), although not as disproportionately as it is reflected in this sample. But as there is a scarcity of research about young adult carers, there is not a clear picture of the gender balance (Carers Trust, 2014).

## They've been bridging the gap and now it's their Time to be Heard

Young adult carers are bridging the support gap and our research highlights that across education, training and in their search for work young adult carers are facing many obstacles.

The views and issues that young adult carers face are often marginalised and under-represented and Carers Trust's Time to be Heard campaign intends to address this. By raising awareness and visibility of young adult carer issues, Carers Trust Scotland hopes that all young adult carers will have increased confidence, reduced isolation and more opportunities for their voices to be heard.

The research found that:

- 48 school days for young adult carers had been affected because of caring, each year.
- Young adult carers were four times more likely to drop out of college or university than students who were not young adult carers.
- A quarter of young adult carers in school had experienced bullying because of their caring role.
- 49% of the young adult carers who had left education were not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Young adult carers in work missed 17 days per year and had a further 79 days affected because of their caring responsibilities.
- 45% of young adult carers reported having mental health problems.
- Only 22% of young adult carers had received a formal assessment of their needs by their local authority.

These statistics for young adult carers clearly highlight the risks to their education, health and employment prospects.

### About Carers Trust

Carers Trust is a major new 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.

We do this with Network Partners – a unique network of 116 independent carers centres, 55 Crossroads Care schemes and 99 young carers services. Together we are united by a shared vision for carers – to make sure that quality assured information, advice and practical support are available to all carers across the UK.

Over the last decade, Carers Trust's work has increased awareness of who young carers are and the support they need and brought the important issue of children providing care higher up the policy agenda. As these young carers become young adults, they require different types of support to make sure that they are not disadvantaged. Carers Trust Scotland is calling on the Scottish Government and relevant public bodies to secure a positive future for Scotland's young adult carers.

This report has been prepared with input from young adult carers on the Time to be Heard Scotland consultation group. It sets out in more detail the issues raised in the research and what young adult carers need to support them to bridge the gap. Key recommendations made throughout this report have been summarised on page 18. While it focusses on recommendations for Scotland, a further report addresses policy in England and a forthcoming report will address policy in Wales and Northern Ireland.

---

# Life for young adult carers

---

All young adult carers are individuals and have different experiences as carers. This section of the report looks at the recurring issues impacting many young adult carers in their caring roles.

## Disclosure and young adult carers' rights

Young adult carers are still young people and need to be recognised as individuals. They should receive support to ensure that they have the same life chances as young people without caring responsibilities.

**“Worried that my future could be in jeopardy because of my caring responsibilities.”**

**Young adult carer**



Young and young adult carers aged 17 and under have clear and specific rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (SCCYP and Scottish Government, 2008), including the right to be educated and for their caring role not to be detrimental to their education. Education institutions should develop carer specific policies to ensure that young adult carers' rights are protected and that they are able to become successful learners. Additionally, all young adult carers have a right to family life and privacy. Disclosure structures in schools/colleges/universities and in employment, training and apprenticeship programmes should adopt clear and accessible processes and policies to allow discreet and easy disclosure of caring responsibilities.

## Hidden (not hiding) young adult carers

For many reasons, some young adult carers remain hidden. They may not self-identify as being carers, they may choose not to disclose their caring status as they could have had negative experiences from previously disclosing this information or they may not be recognised by health and social care professionals as undertaking a caring role if they are not the main carer. Some young adult carers have a young carer background, but this is not the case for all. There are many that become

young adult carers when they are young adults and as they are new to caring, they may be less informed about the support options available to them; this could include, but is certainly not limited to, young adult parent carers.

Many young adult carers are not receiving support and as noted many are hidden. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places statutory duties on aspects of the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach, including the Named Person service for all young people up to the age of 18. These relevant parts of the Act will come into force in 2016. It is important that these duties are successfully implemented and Named Persons receive adequate training to identify and support hidden groups of young and young adult carers.

## Raising awareness of young adult carers

Generally, more needs to be done to raise awareness of young adult carers across Scotland. Local authorities and education institutions should ensure that lessons about what it's like to be a young adult carer feature in personal and social education timetables in schools. This would increase understanding of carers and their issues and help inform hidden young adult carers about where they can go to find support and to understand their role as a young adult carer.

**“More awareness about carers, not just to pupils but also to all teachers and not just guidance teachers.”**

**Young adult carer**

Education professionals are in a unique position to provide many hidden young adult carers with information about where they can go for further support. Education staff should receive carer awareness training as part of their initial training programmes and for existing education staff, within their continued professional development. Moreover, healthcare professionals such as GPs and pharmacists are also likely to encounter young adult carers in their services, as they may be regularly supporting the person being cared for at medical appointments or when collecting prescription medication.

Lack of recognition and not feeling respected by health and social care professionals was a recurring theme that emerged from our research; this is an area where some progressive changes have already been made to try and address this in Scotland. Following on from recommendations at Scottish Young Carers Festivals, some NHS health boards in Scotland have introduced the Young Carers Authorisation Card approach; with implementation currently at a range of stages. All NHS health boards in Scotland should adopt the Young Carers Authorisation Card approach and run promotional campaigns to inform and connect with young and young adult carers about this.

A range of consultations with young adult carers has shown that they believe that the Scottish Government should extend the age of the Young Carers Authorisation Card approach to at least 25 years old to encompass all young adult carers. Many

young adult carers aged 18–25 have experienced similar issues with regards to lack of recognition of their carer status. The Authorisation Card could then be used to raise the status of young and young adult carers with health and social care professionals and could also be used as a disclosure tool in education, employment and training situations.

## Transition and carer's assessment

Young adult carers are in a transitional period in many areas of their lives. Our research found that only 22% of respondents had received a formal assessment of their needs. The prospective Carers Legislation – Consultation on Proposals – January 2014 (Scottish Government, 2014) consulted on transition from young carer status to adult carer status within the Scottish Government's age definition (COSLA and Scottish Government, 2010). It is crucial that future Scottish legislation provides young carers with a carer's assessment (or its successor) in advance of transition, if they are deemed likely to become an adult carer.



## Supporting young adult carers

At present, young adult carers and Carers Trust Scotland partners report wide variations between local authorities in the levels of support that young adult carers receive and what is available to them. Our research highlights the importance of young adult carer services for these young people; making them more confident (72%), supporting them to achieve in education (26%) and enabling them to connect with other young adult carers (60%).

More provision needs to be made available to support the development and sustainability of specialist young adult carer support groups and services across Scotland.

## Physical health and wellbeing

Further research into the health and wellbeing benefits for young adult carers who access specialist support services could highlight the need to invest in these. It is estimated that carers, as providers of services, save the health and social care system in Scotland over £10bn each year (Carers UK and University of Leeds, 2011). There is a need to invest in appropriate support for young adult carers in order for them to be able to provide appropriate **unpaid** care and maintain a healthy and fulfilled life. Furthermore, financial investment by local authorities and NHS health boards in young adult carers' life-skills training could provide young adult carers with more knowledge about how to live a healthy lifestyle and maintain a balanced diet.

## Young adult carers and mental health

45% of young adult carers surveyed reported having mental health problems. NHS health boards and the Scottish Government should support the development of targeted campaigns for young adult carers to encourage them to seek support for their mental health problems.

**“I’m up quite a lot during the night with my great gran and have a lot on my mind, so in school I don’t have a lot of concentration and my grades lack. It would help if there was people I could talk to about my feelings and issues as I have felt quite sad and not able to deal with things.”**

**Young adult carer**

Carers centres and services generally have more access to this relatively hidden group. More financial help for mental health support projects and early intervention programmes within these centres and services would help to support carers with mental health problems.

Further detailed research into the mental health of young adult carers would give the Scottish Government and NHS health boards a better understanding of the recurring mental health problems experienced by these young people and allow for more targeted investment in support and service provision.

## Bullying behaviours

Bullying can have a detrimental and negative long-term impact on a young person’s mental health and wellbeing. Our research found that one in four young adult carers have reported experiencing bullying. More investment in anti-bullying work around young and young adult carers and targeted awareness campaigns would further highlight who and what is a young and young adult carer, the important roles they play and challenge associated bullying behaviours.

Young and young adult carers have the right to be educated, to self-expression and to be protected from discrimination. Education institutions should develop carer specific policies and do more to ensure that young adult carers’ rights are protected.

The GIRFEC wellbeing indicators (Scottish Government, 2014) state that all children and young people up to at least 19 years old should positively progress in life and they should be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Bullying behaviour is harmful for young and young adult carers’ wellbeing.

**“I was bullied all through school and was pushed out because I couldn’t go out with my friends as my mum was getting ill and needed someone to care for her.”**

**Young adult carer**

Education institutions should ensure that anti-bullying policies specifically mention that bullying of young and young adult carers is a breach of such policy.

Under the Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009 carers of any age have protection from experiencing hate crimes based on their caring role for a disabled person. Under the Act, the police and courts need to take into account the reasons behind the crime, which can lead to more serious punishments. Some instances of discrimination endured by carers – such as assault – are a criminal offence and if these behaviours could be proved as aggravated because of their caring role for a disabled person, then this would be warranted as a hate crime. Police Scotland should amend their hate crime reporting forms, including their online forms, to ask a supplementary question when a person selects the disability – Hatred Motivation – option; to ask if the person who experienced the crime is a carer.

**“Protect the cared for and the carer.”**

Young adult carer

This should then be widely promoted to carers through connecting with local carer centres and services, so that carers are aware of this and the protection available to them under this legislation. This would also provide data about the levels of disability aggravated hate crime experienced by carers.

## Equality issues

Our research echoes the perceived gender imbalance that girls and women are more likely to be carers than boys and men. There is a need for more investment in youth provision on mainstream gender work and more information resources produced about who and what is a young adult carer. These may address the gender issues impacting caring, assist with more open disclosure of caring statuses – particularly for boys and men who are carers – and challenge stereotypes often projected onto specific roles (Carers Trust, 2014). The development of information resources to raise awareness about young adult carers could address the misconceptions of caring and challenge stereotypes often associated with specific roles.

Further research would also strengthen understanding of the multiple layers of discrimination that some carers endure – including, but not limited to, black, Asian and minority ethnic carers and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender carers – and the support gaps that they experience and how this impacts their education, employment, training and other outcomes in their lives.

## Finances, welfare and bursaries

As our research indicates and other research (National Union of Students, 2013) emphasises, many young adult carers are living in low income households and some are living in poverty. Governments and local authorities need to ensure that welfare cuts do not impact young adult carers' ability to undertake further and higher education, which could ultimately affect future opportunities and their ability to have a prosperous career and improve their standards of living. Governments should support the development of carer-focused national guidance on young adult

carer welfare, bursary and financial support entitlements. This should be promoted widely to ensure that all young adult carers are receiving consistent and coherent information about what financial support they are entitled to while in school, college, university, employment, training or while unemployed and what support is available to prevent young adult carers becoming NEET.

Other research (Scottish Youth Parliament, 2014) and anecdotal evidence from the Scottish Young Carers Festivals highlights that many young adult carers who are in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and other student bursaries use these to support the basic needs of their families and are thus not being spent as intended – to support them to buy educational materials, purchase food and travel to their place of study. Local authorities need to recognise that the unpredictable nature of caring may impact young adult carers' time-keeping and attendance at their place of study, as they may need to provide additional care. The Scottish Government has now issued EMA guidance documents to all local authorities and, within the guidance, local authorities are expected to take individual circumstances into consideration when reviewing bursary attendance based sanctions. Local authorities need to do more to ensure that the person being cared for has sufficient support to meet their needs, which should allow young adult carers to be able to use their bursaries for their intended purposes.

All young adult carers aged 16–19 years old in school or college who are not receiving other bursary sources or Carer's Allowance should be entitled to EMA, as many young adult carers are unable to supplement their income with part-time work in order to improve their financial situation while in full-time education. If household incomes are above the regulated income for receipt of EMA, this does not always mean that young adult carers will be financially supported by the household to attend their place of study and purchase all the materials required for their studies.



“I got no financial support at college because of my parents' income, but it would have really helped me because I didn't have time to get a part-time job.”

Young adult carer

---

## Beyond the caring role

---

The experience on the pathway to adulthood is unique for all young people. This section of the report looks at some of the key issues impacting many young adult carers while they are trying to progress their lives beyond their caring role/s.

### Seeing young adult carers holistically

There are many obstacles for young adult carers on their path to adulthood, resulting in poorer educational attainment, less chances of employment and extreme pressure on them to bridge the gap when health and social care services are not available. Ultimately, young adult carers have the right to be recognised as individuals beyond their caring roles by decision makers in all aspect of their lives. Carers' assessments and child's plans should also take a holistic approach to ensure that young adult carers are able to meet their own potential in education, employment and training and that they are able to prosper as individuals.

**“You are more likely to get into college when you do extracurricular activities and as a young carer you can't.”**

**Young adult carer**

It is also important to highlight that some young adult carers may be in a relationship, cohabiting or married and could have their own children. Young adult carers could be caring for their partner, spouse or their own child/children. These young adult carers will have different needs and experiences to young adult carers who are caring for parents and siblings.

Social time and friendship is important for all young people – under the UNCRC young people aged 17 and under have the right to relax and play. Child's plans and carers'

assessments should ensure that young adult carers are still able to maintain a social life outside of their caring responsibilities. Young adult carers must be active agents in the development and ongoing review of carers' assessments and child's plans – taking into account that levels of care can fluctuate and seeing the carer holistically.

### Time to be listened to

Young people have a right for their voices to be heard when decisions are made that affect them. All young people value meaningful opportunities to influence positive change and to improve their world. Being a responsible citizen is one of the



capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Government, 2006) and the Scottish Government should support programmes and projects that allow young adult carers in Scotland to truly have their voices heard at both local and national levels.

## Caring, family relationships and dynamics

Caring provides many young adult carers with a sense of responsibility and many value having the opportunity to undertake these roles. But young adult carers also have a right to family life and to maintain positive relationships with their family members and the person being cared for – if they are a family member – outside of their caring role. It is important that carers' assessments and child's plans reflect family dynamics, relationships and young people's rights. As previously mentioned, there can be a fluctuating nature to caring and at certain times the person being cared for may require more intensive care. Young adult carers may not be able to provide the usual level of **unpaid** care when they are doing exams or other activities that take up their time.

It is important that both the young adult carer and the person being cared for feels comfortable and respected at all times, and are able to maintain a positive relationship outside of caring. Young adult carers should not be performing inappropriate care duties and local authorities need to protect young adult carers from having to perform these. Carers' assessments and child's plans should reflect this clearly and provision should be made to ensure that young adult carers are not undertaking inappropriate care roles.

**“I want a future but I also need to care for my family.”**

Young adult carer

Some young adult carers may also decide to live independently and may no longer be able to undertake caring responsibilities. Carers' assessments and child's plans should be reviewed on the request of the carer and should be amended to reflect any changes in their circumstances. This would allow young adult carers and the person being cared for to progress in their lives without any detrimental impact on the young adult carer's life opportunities or the level of care for the person being cared for. Moving out of the family home or relocating for study or employment opportunities can be a daunting prospect for all young people, but for young adult carers the fear of the impact that this will have on the person being cared for often results in many young adult carers opting for local employment opportunities and selecting courses and educational institutions that suit their caring role; this can negatively impact the longer-term opportunities available for these young people to progress.

**“I am the main carer for my mum so my life at the moment revolves around her, so I will not be able to leave for university until full-time care has been put in place for her.”**

Young adult carer

More provision should be invested into young adult carer specialist support groups and services so that these young people are supported to be prepared and informed about their options when deciding to live independently and what further support the person they care for may be entitled to as a consequence of this.

## Careers advice

Our research also highlights that many young adult carers (87%) who were no longer in education were dissatisfied with the careers advice that they received. Career guidance staff should take a holistic approach when offering advice to carers, taking into account their caring role but also seeing the carer as an individual. More training for careers guidance staff around carers would help to ensure that young adult carers are receiving relevant information about training, vocational qualifications and further and higher education options.

## Young adult carers' juggling act

Many young adult carers are juggling education or training and employment along with their carer role. There is a need for further research to identify what needs to change to ensure positive education, employment and training outcomes for young adult carers. Opportunities for All is the Scottish Government's commitment to offer a place of learning for all young people aged 16–19 years old. Key partners in this are Skills Development Scotland, Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus, the Scottish Funding Council and local authorities. More support is required in implementation to ensure that young adult carers are able to take on such opportunities while also taking into account their caring responsibilities, without this having a negative impact on the person being cared for. Governments should support a programme for apprenticeship and vocational training providers and employers to help young adult carers enter employment and sustain it.



“I think I would find it easier to get a job if I wasn't a carer. My family don't have the time to help me apply for jobs, it would be really good to get help.”

Young adult carer

---

# Making life better for young adult carers through action

---

There are many recommendations and associated actions throughout this report. This section covers some of the key actions that decision makers should consider to empower young adult carers to have their voices heard; these actions could make a real difference to their lives.

## Strategy

Getting it Right for Young Carers: The Young Carers Strategy for Scotland 2010–2015 (COSLA and Scottish Government, 2010) has paved the way to highlight and protect the rights of young carers. Future strategies should take more account of the needs of young adult carers to ensure that this relatively hidden group is being heard and more is done to support them. Policy developments and amendments are opportunities to improve the quality of life for young adult carers and the person they care for.

## Carer specific policies

The Scottish Government, Education Scotland and local authorities should endorse guidance for education providers to adopt specific policies to support all carers in education institutions. Pressure should be applied across all employment sectors by Governments for employers and apprenticeship providers with high levels of young people in their workforce to adopt flexible carer specific employment policies. These would support carers to work and ensure that they have the same opportunities as people without caring responsibilities for job security and promotion.

**“As carers I believe we have many skills and qualities that would benefit employers but I think employers attach a stigma to being a carer, making it seem more bleak than it actually is.”**

**Young adult carer**

Many existing carer specific policies take a reactive approach to addressing carers’ needs in crisis situations. Future carer policies should be more proactive to prevent crisis situations occurring before action is taken to better support carers. Carers Trust Scotland is able to support education institutions, and those employers and apprenticeship providers with high levels of young people in their employment to develop policies and procedures; this assistance should be utilised.

Education policy development that supports young and young adult carers is imperative to ensure successful futures for them. The purpose of the Curriculum for Excellence is encapsulated in the four capacities – to enable each child and young person to be a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and

an effective contributor. The curriculum aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the knowledge, skills and attributes that they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future. However, due to absence rates often caused by caring responsibilities, bullying, mental ill health and juggling study, work and caring responsibilities, many young and young adult carers do not meet their true potential as detailed under the four capacities.

“My grades aren’t as good as I would have hoped, because of my caring role.”

Young adult carer

Clear, simple and proactive carer support policies in education institutions would help to ensure that young and young adult carers are supported to meet their true potential.

## Making disclosure of carer status more accessible

Local authorities, schools and colleges should ask if prospective students are carers as part of their admission processes. This would help with disclosure processes for carers and would hopefully initiate education providers to take a proactive approach to supporting them. Additionally, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service should ask candidates if they have a caring role as part of its application process. This would allow for more robust statistics on the number of young adult and adult carers who apply for further and higher education courses and could also be a tool that ensures that institutions are aware of a student’s carer status in advance of them entering an institution. As such, these education institutions will be more prepared and able to provide sufficient support to student carers. Colleges and universities should identify and support student carers and draw on models of good practice and work with student unions and the National Union of Students Scotland to raise awareness of the support available and provide peer support opportunities.



## Finance, welfare and bursary policy

Welfare and financial support policy for carers is another area that could significantly benefit quality of life for young adult carers and the person or people they care for. Other research (National Union of Students, 2013), and anecdotal evidence from the Scottish Young Carers Festivals has highlighted that student carers are three times more likely to take on high-risk debt to meet basic living expenses.

**“Scared of getting into debt. Would be helpful if there was more information about money care.”**

Young adult carer

Some student carers – depending on individual financial circumstance – have access to additional bursary support through Student Awards Agency for Scotland (2014). More awareness of this additional support for student carers may encourage them to access higher education and remain in it.

Many young adult carers are living in low income households and public transport costs are also a barrier for them being able to take forward opportunities. Free or concessionary public transport for young and young adult carers at all times

would allow more flexibility for them to work or study outside of their localities; this scheme could be modelled on the Young Scot National Entitlement card for discreet usage.

Many young adult carers who are NEET struggle to meet the requirements for Jobseeker’s Allowance while undertaking their caring responsibilities. Flexibility of Jobseeker’s Allowance requirements for young adult and adult carers would ensure that fewer are experiencing sanctions and ensure that they are able to meet their basic needs while searching for employment opportunities.

**“Better funding, more benefits that are easier to access. More support. Less stigma.”**

Young adult carer

**“I was juggling caring for my mum and having to remember to do job searches and make set appointments. This was not always possible, my money was stopped a number of times. All I wanted was support.”**

Young adult carer

---

# Conclusion: It is young adult carers' Time to be Heard

---

This report is part of the work of Carers Trust in collaboration with young adult carers across the UK to find out what would make a difference to their lives and to campaign for change. Young adult carers do not always have a choice about their situation but policy and decision makers at local and national levels can listen to them and make decisions and support policies that could improve their quality of life.

Young adult carers should be identified in education and offered extra support by schools, colleges, universities and specialist young adult carer services. Coordinated work should address the exclusion that they can experience and progressive carer specific policies by education institutions, employers and apprenticeship providers would better support and give young adult carers more opportunities for their futures.

Carers Trust Scotland is calling for a commitment from the Scottish Government and relevant public bodies to implement policies and initiatives that prevent young adult carers from being disadvantaged in their education, employment and health. There are severe negative consequences which can be seen in their attendance at school, college or university, in their educational attainment, in their physical and mental health and in their likelihood of being out of work. These consequences are unacceptable and unjust and its young adult carers' Time to be Heard; they are calling on decision makers to:

- Deliver a social care and health system that does not rely on children and young people to provide inappropriate levels of care at the expense of their health and their future.
- Offer support in schools, colleges and universities so that young adult carers are empowered and able to meet their academic potentials.
- Provide clear and consistent offers of support and information, in terms of finances.
- Have an equal chance to train and work.

It is young adult carers' Time to be Heard.



---

# Key recommendations to better support young adult carers in Scotland

---

## Education:

- More awareness of young adult carers and the issues that they can experience.
- Targeted young adult carer anti-bullying and mental health campaigns and projects.
- Improved identification of and support for young adult carers in further and higher education.

## Finance, welfare and bursary:

- National guidance on young adult carer welfare, bursary and financial support entitlements while they are in school, college, university, employment, and training or if NEET.
- Entitlement to EMA for all young adult carers aged 16–19 years old in full-time education who are not receiving other bursary sources or Carer's Allowance.
- Free or concessionary public transport at all times for young and young adult carers.

## Employment:

- More support for young adult carers to undertake training and employment opportunities and to sustain and succeed in these.
- More flexibility in Jobseeker's Allowance requirements for young adult and adult carers.

## Policy and training:

- Carer specific policies with clear and accessible disclosure procedures embedded across all health and social care services, education providers, training initiatives and employment sectors.
- Education staff, Named Person professionals and careers guidance staff undertaking carer awareness and support training as standard.
- A holistic carer's assessment for young adult carers in advance of transition, with them fully involved throughout the process. These plans reviewed on request of the carer and supported by more investment in specialist young adult carer support services.
- National carers strategies taking more account of the needs of young adult carers with investment in programmes and projects that allow young adult carers to have their voices heard both at local and national levels.
- Young Carers Authorisation Cards made available by all NHS health boards and backed by promotional campaigns. Scottish Government to extend the age of the Young Carers Authorisation Card to 25 years old.

---

# References

---

Carers Trust (2014), *Husband, Partner, Dad, Son, Carer? A survey of the Experiences and Needs of Male Carers* (London, Carers Trust).

Carers UK and University of Leeds (2011), *Valuing Carers* (London, Carers UK).

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Norwich, TSO).

COSLA and Scottish Government (2010), *Getting it Right for Young Carers: The Young Carers Strategy for Scotland 2010–2015 Summary* (Edinburgh, Scottish Government).

Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009 (Norwich, TSO).

National Union of Students (2013), *Learning with Care: Experiences of Student Carers in the UK* (London, NUS).

SCCYP and Scottish Government (2008), *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: A Guide for Children and Young People* (Edinburgh, Scottish Government).

Scottish Government (2006), *A Curriculum for Excellence Building the Curriculum 1: the Contribution of Curriculum Areas* (Edinburgh, Scottish Government).

Scotland's Census (2011).

Scottish Government (2014) *Carers Legislation – Consultation on Proposals* (Edinburgh, Scottish Government).

Scottish Government (2014), *Getting it Right for Children and Families: Proposal for the Development of Guidance to Support the GIRFEC Provisions in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014* (Edinburgh, Scottish Government).

Scottish Youth Parliament (2014), *A Costly Youth: The Impact of Caring on Young People in Scotland* (Edinburgh, SYP).

Sempik, J and Becker, S (2013), *Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education* (London, Carers Trust).

Sempik, J and Becker, S (2014), *Young Adult Carers and Employment* (London, Carers Trust).

Sempik, J and Becker, S (2014), *Young Adult Carers at College and University* (London, Carers Trust).

Student Awards Agency for Scotland (2014), *Support for Student Carers* (Edinburgh, Student Awards Agency for Scotland).







The **co-operative**  
charity of the year

### Carers Trust Scotland

Skypark 3, Suite 1/2  
14–18 Elliot Place  
Glasgow G3 8EP  
Tel: 0300 123 2008  
Email: [scotland@carers.org](mailto:scotland@carers.org)

[www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)  
[www.youngcarersmatter.org](http://www.youngcarersmatter.org)  
[www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net)  
<http://professionals.carers.org>  
[www.carershub.org](http://www.carershub.org)



[www.facebook.com/carers](http://www.facebook.com/carers)



[www.twitter.com/CarersTrustScot](http://www.twitter.com/CarersTrustScot)



[www.youtube.com/user/CarersTrust](http://www.youtube.com/user/CarersTrust)

Carers Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1145181) and in Scotland (SC042870). Registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 7697170. Registered office: 32–36 Loman Street, London SE1 0EH.