

Carers Trust Network Partners and other Carers Services – how you can support the Going Higher campaign

As part of the Time to be Heard campaign, Carers Trust is turning our attention to young adult carers at university. As you are aware, young adult carers face significant challenges in applying for university, reaching their potential whilst studying and maintaining a good level of health and wellbeing.

Carers Trust research – ‘Young adult carers experiences of college and university’ revealed that:

- Half the days young adult carers spent at college or university were affected because of caring. This could be coming in late, leaving early or absence for the whole day
- Young adult carers are four times more likely to drop out of college or university than their peers
- 42% had paid employment alongside time spent education and caring to support them in their studies

We do not believe this is acceptable. That is why we created the Going Higher campaign to give young adult carers an equal chance when they are at university as their peers.

Make sure you have downloaded the [campaign pack](#)

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The Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 has given local authorities a legal obligation to identify a suitable university for young adult carers if they ask in their Transition Assessment.

This makes it likely that your local university will be approached and it will be important that they know how to support young adult carers at their institution. Universities need to be made aware of these new duties and the tailored, local support that you can give them.

We want all universities to:

Identify

- A vast majority of universities do not have a way to formally identify the number of carers attending their institution
- Without this, universities cannot understand how much money they need to invest to support young adult carers
- **The campaign is asking for all universities to routinely ask all their students if they have caring responsibilities**

Support

- Universities need to do more than count the number of carers. It's about giving them the support to reach their potential
- This can be seemingly small changes, for example extending loans on books so carers have time to read them in the evenings or bigger changes like including carers within the criteria for grants or giving them access to counselling
- Work alongside Network Partners to provide a quality offer of support for young adult carers
- **The campaign is asking for all student carers to be offered tailored support throughout their time at university**

Report

- This is the chance for universities to show off about how well they are doing in supporting carers
- Universities need to monitor how young adult carers are doing right from when they apply to the university to when they graduate
- The best way to do this is through access agreements. You can find out more about these in the glossary section of the [campaigns pack](#)
- **The campaign is asking for student carers to be included in all access agreements as standard**

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Resources

Alongside this pack, Carers Trust, in partnership with NUS and 6 universities from across England have created a toolkit for universities to learn how best to support young adult carers. In it, there are hints and tips on supporting young adult carers from the application stage to graduation.

You can take a look at “Supporting students with caring responsibilities: *ideas and practice for universities to help student carers access and succeed in higher education*” here: <https://professionals.carers.org/unitoolkit>

Creating an offer of support

This is an excellent opportunity for you to contact the universities in your area to offer your expert advice and guidance on the steps they should be taking to support the young adult carers in their institution.

There may be opportunities to gain contracts from the university and attract new young adult carers to your service via outreach and development programmes.

We are asking you to approach the universities in your area to alert them to the Going Higher campaign and share the toolkit with them.

We have created a draft letter for you to customise to send to the Head of Widening Participation at your local universities.

If you know any young adult carers who are currently at university please share the student campaigning resource with them. You can read it here: www.carers.org/goinghigherstudents

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Template letter/ email for the Head of Widening Participation

Dear [Name of the Head of Widening Participation]

Introduce yourself, the Network Partner/ Carers Centre and the service you provide

Information about who carers are

- This is a sample paragraph. You can use this or customise it.

At this university, there will be students who are caring, unpaid for a family member or friend with a disability, mental illness and/ or addiction problem. They can come from any background and be studying for any course. They possess a great number of skills for example budgeting, time management and good organisation.

Statistics

- This strengthens your argument and shows that this is an urgent issue for everyone. The statistics come from this report:
- Add local statistics wherever possible
- Below is a sample paragraph. You can use it or customise it.

This should make them excellent students. However, the results of a survey of young adult carers released by Carers Trust show that they are struggling to fulfil their potential.

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- Young adult carers are four times more likely to drop out of college or university than their peers
- 42% had paid employment alongside time spent education and caring to support them in their studies

The solution

- This needs to be kept simple and manageable
- Please keep the boxed section as it is so all universities are aiming for the same thing but customise the rest if you like

However, it doesn't have to be like this. Three simple steps can make all the difference for young adult carers academic attainment, health and wellbeing.

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Carers Trust are asking all universities to:

- Identify the number of young adult carers
- Support young adult carers using the suggestions in the toolkit
- Report on young adult carers achievements using access agreements

Agreement

- The below is a suggested ask but if there is anything you feel you could add please include it

We ask that you include young adult carers when you think about how you want to change things for the better at your university. It will make a huge difference to a group that needs a little extra support from you to make a huge difference.

- There are loads of ideas in a toolkit we created in partnership with NUS. Take a look and see what you think would make the biggest difference for the students at your university.

Your offer

- Describe the support that you can offer the university
- This could be anything from attending Fresher's Fairs to working alongside the Widening Participation team to create the best support for young adult carers at the university

The ask

- Think about what you would like to happen next. This could be an excellent opportunity for you to make new links with local universities and show what a positive impact Network Partners can have for student's attainment
- See if you can arrange a time to meet with the head of Widening Participation to discuss what you as a Network Partner can offer

Signing off

- See if your CEO would be happy to sign the letter

If you have any comments or questions about the Going Higher campaign or any of Carers Trust's work around education and the Care Act please contact Sophie Parr – Policy and Campaigns Officer (Young Carers and Young Adult Carers) either via email at sparr@carers.org or call 020 7922 7752