Young Carers in Education

A Resource on Identifying and Supporting Young Carers in Education

CARERS TRUST SCOTLAND

Education Scotland Foghlam Alba
For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Contents

Introduction	2
About carers in Scotland	3
Carers (Scotland) Act 2016	6
About the Carers Trust Scotland Digital Education Hub	7
Helpful links	9
References	10

Introduction

Welcome to the Carers Trust Scotland Young Carers in Education Toolkit. It accompanies our Digital Education Hub for all staff in Scotland working with young carers in schools.

Young carers tell us, year on year, that education is one of the biggest challenges they face, and this is often exacerbated by teachers not understanding their caring role.

The Digital Education Hub is an online resource on Carers.org which is broken down by local authority. It has a range of resources such as school awards, lesson plans, presentations, e-modules as part of Professional Learning (PL), school charters and information on local young carer services to help you identify and support young carers in education.

There is also guidance, information and copies of Young Carer Statements.

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.

About carers in Scotland

There are at least 690,000 carers in Scotland and this includes 29,000 young carers under the age of 18 (Scottish Government, 2015). The value of unpaid care provided by carers in Scotland is £10,347,400,000 a year (University of Sheffield, University of Leeds and CIRCLE, 2015).

Three out of five of us will become carers at some stage in our lives in the UK (Carers UK, 2014) and one in ten of us is already fulfilling some sort of caring role (UK Census, 2011).

About young carers

At Carers Trust, our definition of a young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol.

Some young carers look after more than one person and may have health issues of their own.

Some young carers start giving care at a very young age and some are not aware they are carers. Other young people become carers overnight due to sudden illness or injury.

Young carers can have many different roles and responsibilities that can include but are not restricted to:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping.
- Physical care, such as helping someone out of bed.
- Emotional support, such as talking to someone who is distressed.
- Personal care, such as helping someone dress.
- Managing the family budget and collecting prescriptions.
- Helping to give medicine.
- Helping someone communicate.
- Looking after brothers and sisters.

“I struggle to complete homework and on bad days I can’t leave the person I care for so it impacts my education significantly.”

Young carer, 15

“Mum has migraines and sometimes blacks out. She has to go to bed and sleep. I get her drinks and tablets. I make my own food. I don’t want to leave her alone when she is ill.”

Young carer, 13

Why are many young carers hidden?

The condition of the person I care for is not obvious so people don't think that I need any help.

I didn't realise I was a carer or that my life is different to that of my peers.

I don't want to be any different from my peers so I don't draw attention to my caring role.

I want to keep my identity at school/ college separate from my caring role.

It's not the sort of thing I feel I can discuss with my friends.

There has been no opportunity to share my story.

I am worried about bullying.

I worry that my family will be split up and that I'll be taken into care.

I worry that social work will get involved.

I want to keep caring a secret.

I'm embarrassed.

> My younger siblings have additional needs. This means it is hard to study at home. I am often very tired as my sister is awake a lot at night and we share a room.
>
> Young carer, 15

> I feel like my teachers should understand more about my caring role.
>
> Young carer, 13

Possible indicators that someone is a young carer

A young carer might show all, some, or none of these signs.

- Often late or missing days or weeks off school for no reason.
- Often tired, anxious or withdrawn.
- Often checking their phone or asking to call home.
- Finding it difficult to concentrate on their work.
- Having difficulty joining in extra-curricular activities or unable to attend school trips.
- Not handing in homework/coursework on time, or completing it late and to a low standard.
- Anxious or concerned about an ill or disabled relative.
- Secretive about home life.

> I have a pupil support teacher but it's hard because he's always really busy and doesn't really have the time to have a talk.
>
> Young carer, 16

Carers (Scotland) Act 2016

In April 2018, the Scottish Government launched the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. **Under the Carers (Scotland) Act the definition of a young carer is anyone aged 18 and under, or 18 and still in school, who provides, or intends to provide care.** The key duty in the Act is that carers who meet local eligibility criteria must be provided with support to meet their identified needs. When carers do not meet eligibility criteria for support, local authorities must set out how they will meet those needs.

Under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, all young carers in Scotland have the right to a Young Carer Statement. If you identify a young carer in your class, or school, you should inform them about the opportunity to have a Young Carer Statement. This statement will detail any support needs the young carer may need. Your local authority will be able to tell you who is leading on Young Carer Statements for your area.

> **"I miss school a lot I worry about mum and can't think in class."**
>
> **Young carer, 17**

Young Carer Statement

The Young Carer Statement:

- Helps to understand about the caring tasks a young carer does.
- Details how often a young carer does these tasks.
- Informs about the effect this has on their schoolwork and overall wellbeing.
- Gives opportunity for a young carer to talk about the things they like and would like to do. For example attending clubs or taking part in sports.
- Looks at emergency and future planning.
- Gives a review date for the statement.
- Informs whether the young carer meets local authority criteria for support and how much support they are entitled to.

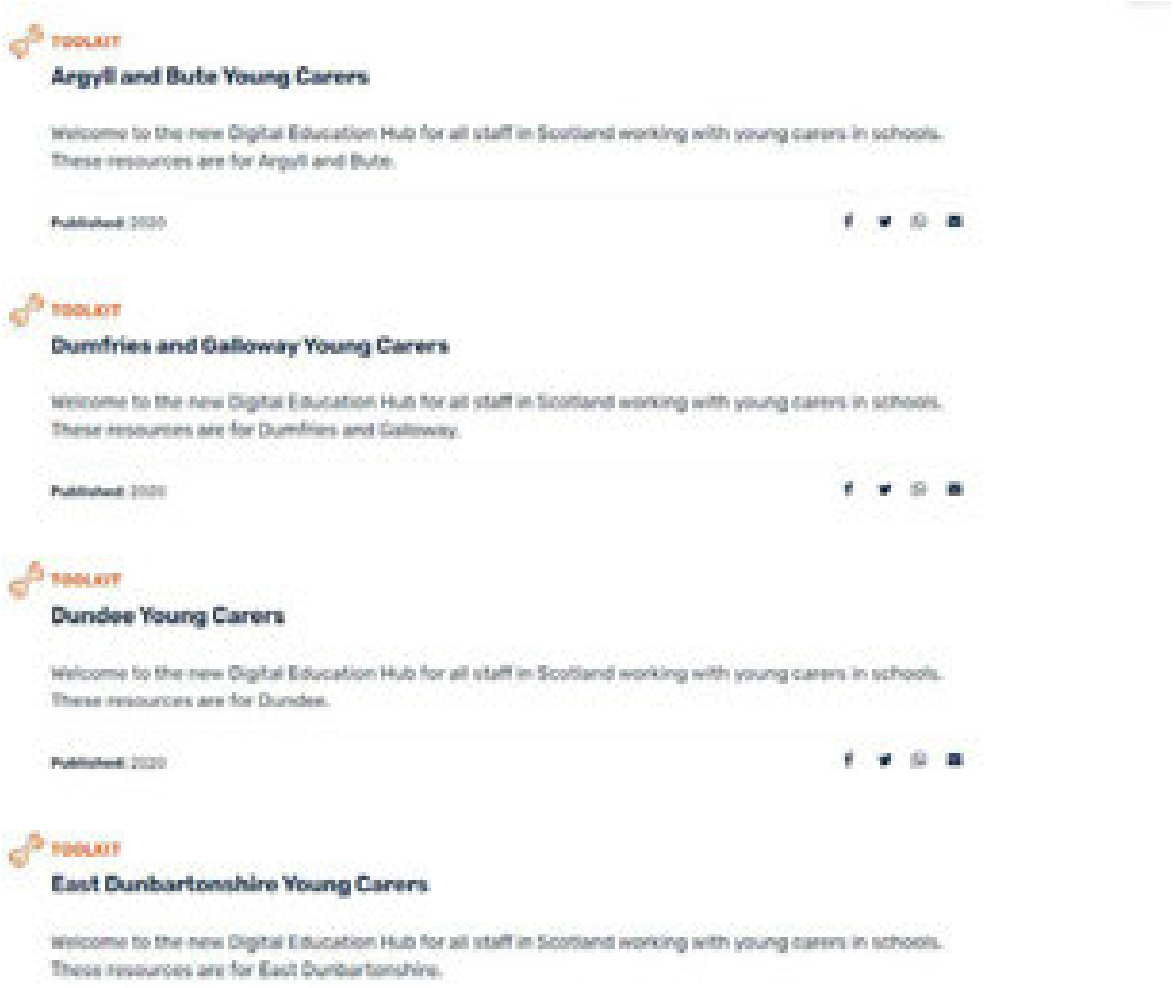
There is a duty on the local authority to offer a Young Carer Statement, however, the young carer does not have to accept this offer and should still be able to access information and limited support if they refuse. If a young carer initially declines the offer of a statement they can ask for one at a future date.

Each local authority has developed their own version of the Young Carer Statement and you can view these on the Digital Education Hub.

About the Carers Trust Scotland Digital Education Hub

You can find the Digital Education Hub on our website at **carers.org/our-work-in-scotland/our-work-in-scotland**.

The Hub is broken down by local authority and you will find information provided by young carer services across Scotland to help you identify and support young carers in school.



To find out how to add your resources to the Digital Education Hub, get in touch with Carers Trust Scotland by emailing **scotland@carers.org**.

How your school can help

- Ensure all staff undertake Young Carer Awareness Training. To find out about training local to you, get in touch with Carers Trust Scotland by emailing **scotland@carers.org**.
- Be aware of local support available for young carers, such as the local young carer service.
- Invite a local young carer service to your school to deliver presentations in assemblies, Personal and Social Education (PSE) lessons, and at Continuing Professional Development days and parent/guardian evenings.
- Record all young carers on Scottish Educational Management Information Software SEEMiS so they can access any additional support they are entitled to.
- Create a Young Carer Charter which commits to providing information and support for young carers in your school. This could help create a young carer friendly environment and would include things like developing young carer notice boards and groups/clubs.
- Nominate a Young Carers Champion. A Young Carers Champion is a member of staff who is the link between the school and young carer service, local authorities and other organisations. Ensure young carers know who they are and how to go to them for advice and support. Young Carers Champions should undertake Young Carer Awareness Training and be responsible for providing staff with updates relating to young carers.
- Take part in Young Carers Action Day which is organised annually by Carers Trust. With Young Carers Action Day taking place every year in March – use the day to get people to take action to support young carers. Find out more on **Carers.org**.

Most importantly – every young carer is different and so are their caring responsibilities - **listen** to the young carer and what support they need to help them thrive in school.

> **Guidance teacher and duty head teacher helped me get in touch with young carer service, which has really helped me.**
>
> Young carer, 16

Helpful links

Carers Trust Scotland

You can find your nearest Carers Trust Network Partner for local support for carers by using our 'Find support in your area' facility at **www.carers.org** (any time) or calling **0300 772 9600** (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm).

Not every part of the UK is covered by a Carers Trust Network Partner; if that is the case for you, visit **www.carers.org/help-and-info/find-carer-services-near-you** to find other sources of local support.

Carers' Charter

www.gov.scot/publications/carers-charter/

Carers (Scotland) Act 2016

www2.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care/Unpaid-Carers/Implementation/Carers-scotland-act-2016

Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 – Jargon Buster for Young Carers

carers.org/carers-and-the-law/policy-and-legislation-in-scotland

Education Scotland National Improvement Hub – Supporting Young Carers in Education

education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/supporting-young-carers-in-education

Education Scotland -Supporting Young Carers in Education during COVID-19

education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/supporting-young-carers-in-education-during-covid-19/

My Rights, My Say

myrightsmysay.scot/

Young Scot – The Young Carers Package

young.scot/get-informed/national/how-to-sign-up-for-the-young-carers-package

Additional support for learning: statutory guidance 2017

www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland/

Coping is Difficult But I Feel Proud

www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/CopingWithCaring.pdf

References

Carers UK (2014), *Facts about Carers – Policy Briefing*, May 2014 (Carers UK).

Scottish Government (2015), *Social Care,*Viewed October 2020. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-care/unpaid-carers/.

UK Census, 2011. Office for National Statistics. This information is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3].The Census identified 6.5 million carers in the UK. However, we know from research that young carers are vastly under identified by the census. Carers Trust believes it is important to recognise young carers as they are too often invisible. We therefore use an estimate of in the region of seven million.

University of Sheffield, University of Leeds and CIRCLE (2015), *Valuing Carers 2015 – the Rising Value of Carers' Support* (Carers UK).

Your notes

CARERS TRUST SCOTLAND

Carers Trust Scotland
Spaces
Tay House
300 Bath Street
Glasgow
G2 4JR

Tel: 0300 772 7701
Email: scotland@carers.org
Carers.org

www.facebook.com/CarersTrustScotland
www.twitter.com/CarersTrustScot
www.instagram.com/Carers.Trust
www.youtube.com/user/CarersTrust

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