

**PE1470/B**

**Public Petitions Committee PE1470**

**Questions for local authorities;**

What are your views/experience on the issues raised in the petition?

How well do the policies aimed at supporting the needs of young carers work in practice?

**Reply on behalf of Clackmannanshire/Stirling Councils' Shared Service**

In relation to question one the petition on the need for a young carers allowance for those still in education or under 18, raises a number of points. As can be noted in the evidence given to the committee young carers can face financial hardship and isolation related to the role they perform. It is also noted that this unpaid caring role provides considerable savings to this country. With over 100,000 young carers performing this vital role estimates of the savings could be in the region of several million pounds.

It is also noted from the experience of those working with young carers that this role can lead to isolation and to young people missing out on 'a normal childhood'. This can also lead to reduced educational opportunities which can adversely effect their future life chances and job prospects. It is therefore felt that everything should be done to try to assist these young people in accessing education and socialisation opportunities out with their caring role.

Concerns were raised in relation to the payment of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) due to issues of falling attendance related to care commitments. This highlights the need to review current provision of supports to young carers. However as was also noted in the evidence there is an issue with the recognition that young people fall in to this category. This therefore identifies a possible concern as young people who are not assessed as young carers may miss out on any supports available.

It is therefore suggested that more work needs to be done on the assessment of young carers to ensure more focused support and this can be carried out under the current GIRFEC approach. It would also be recommended that access to EMA for young people assessed as performing a caring role should be reviewed by local authorities to ensure these young people are not missing out on this assistance.

Regarding the second question it is felt that more can and should be done in terms of the provision of support to young carers and this requires better coordination. As it is felt that current support may well be a variable dependant on where the young person lives.

Clackmannanshire and Stirling authorities would welcome more support being made available to young carers via the Scottish Government with a focus on better assessment and delivery of current supports.

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Clackmannanshire & Stirling Councils