

**PE1470/J**

Scottish Government Letter of 8 April 2013

**CONSIDERATION OF PETITION [PE1470](#)**

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to establish a Young Carer's Grant for carers in full-time education or under the age of 18.

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Scottish Government:-

- What are your views on what the petition seeks?
  - What evaluation has the Scottish Government undertaken on its policy initiatives on support for young carers including Getting it Right for Young Carers, implementation of the additional support for learning legislation and Youth Employment Strategy?
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**Scottish Government views**

1. The Scottish Government welcomes the petition by Lauren King on behalf of the Scottish Youth Parliament and recognises many of the issues raised, including financial disadvantage, barriers to educational achievement and the impact of caring responsibilities.

***Getting it Right for Young Carers***

2. The Scottish Government agrees that young carers should be supported in education, health and by other means. This is why, with partners, we are implementing *Getting it Right for Young Carers*. The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that young carers have the same opportunities as other children and young people who do not have caring responsibilities and that they are not disadvantaged. It is important, therefore, to support young carers in primary school and through transition to secondary school to Further and Higher Education and employment.

3. Some of the Scottish Government initiatives to support young carers include:

- funding of the **Eryc and Trayc** initiative being taken forward by the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance (SYCSA) in primary schools;
- funding of a toolkit for **secondary schools** – to be launched soon;
- funding of the **College Development Network** over two years to raise awareness of young carers (and carers) in colleges and to support young carers (and carers);

- funding of the voluntary sector **Short Breaks Fund** over four years (£14 million), a proportion of which is supporting young carers, and funding of the annual Scotland-wide Young Carers Festival;
- funding of **NHS Board Carer Information Strategies** (CIS) to 2015 (£29 million), a proportion of which is supporting young carers;
- development and funding of the **Young Carers Card pilot** in all of four NHS Board areas and in parts of two Health Board areas. The card is to be used in both health and educational settings. Some of the areas have negotiated discounts for young carers with sports and leisure providers. The Scottish Government recently invited all Health Boards to consider introducing a card into their areas; and
- the local authority power to provide funded support to young carers under the **Self-directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013** Act which will be commenced in April 2014. In the case of carers under the age of 16 the decision-maker will be the “appropriate person”, which is likely to be the parent or guardian of the young carer but could be another person. Under Section 8 of the 2013 Act the decision-maker must involve the young carer in the decision-making process.

### ***Additional Support for Learning***

4. Under the Additional Support for Learning Act education authorities have responsibilities to identify, make provision for and review the additional support needs of all their pupils. Where a child or young person may have an additional support needs as a result of being a young carer, these responsibilities apply. This means that a plan would be put in place to help those pupils who are young carers with their learning. Information for young people on the Act is available from <http://enquire.org.uk/yp/>.

5. In February 2013 Scottish Ministers provided their second report to Parliament on the implementation of additional support for learning. This year the report had an additional focus on how young carers are supported in schools. The report sets out examples of positive practice in meeting the learning needs of young carers. The report can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/02/7808>.

### ***Training, skills and employment***

6. Through *Opportunities for All* the Scottish Government has made an explicit commitment to an offer of a place in learning or training to every 16-19 year old not engaged in education, training or employment.

7. From 2012, the Scottish Government is providing £1.5 million over 3 years through the Employer Recruitment Incentive (ERI) to encourage employers to recruit the most disadvantaged young people, including young carers.

8. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has introduced *My World of Work* which is a new online resource helping people to plan, build and direct their careers and is

central to developing individuals' career management skills. At local level, SDS teams are working with carers and young carers centres and projects to raise awareness of SDS's services.

9. The Scottish Government has a Manifesto commitment to introduce a Caring for Carers Employers Kitemark to recognise those employers who support carers and young carers into and in employment. To take this forward, the Scottish Government is working in partnership with Carers Scotland and a wide range of employers' organisations.

### ***Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)***

10. The petition recognises that there is an amount of flexibility in the entitlement to EMA and argues that eligibility should be extended to better support young carers, particularly those not in learning or those who are under the school leaving age. The Scottish Government believes however that the EMA is specifically intended to support young people to stay in learning beyond compulsory school age.

11. When the scenario exists of parents not being able to sign consent forms, there is normally social work involvement and it is social work personnel who authorise the forms.

12. The Scottish Government is considering whether or not to make changes to the guidance or business model to reflect on the ground practice.

### **Evaluation of Getting it Right for Young Carers etc**

13. The Scottish Government has received updates from Health Boards on the use of CIS funding and has requested further updates. We will be asking a few local authorities for feedback on Eryc and Trayc in primary schools. We requested information from the College Development Network on use of the EMA. Shared Care Scotland evaluates the Short Breaks Fund on our behalf. We intend to work with a sample of local authorities (still to be determined) to evaluate implementation of *Getting it Right for Young Carers (and Caring Together)*. Skills Development Scotland will be working towards targets for the Employer Recruitment Incentive.

14. Please see **Annex A** attached for further information.

### **Conclusion**

15. The Scottish Government believes that, rather than a Young Carers Grant, the focus should be on the combined initiatives outlined in this reply to the Petition and through Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the forthcoming Children and Young People Bill to help support young carers in education, training and employment. This should make a difference financially although we appreciate the ongoing challenges. Some initiatives such as the Kitemark will also take longer to achieve results.

Moira Oliphant  
Carers Policy, The Scottish Government

### Short Breaks Fund

29 organisations supporting young carers have been awarded a total of over £400,000 to date. Some of these projects include:

- **East Lothian Young Carers**  
To run a holiday club and family days out to support young carers
- **Multi-Cultural Family Base, Edinburgh**  
To provide social and cultural activities for young carers from BME communities.
- **Quarriers Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire**  
To provide activities for young carers and young people who live with kinship carers
- **Mid Argyll Young Carers Support Group**  
To develop services for young carers in Argyll & Bute
- **The Roses Charitable Trust, Oban**  
For activities at the outdoor centre for young carers living across Scotland

### Education Maintenance Allowance: Further Education

“At Stevenson when a young person was identified as struggling to meet 100% target, as part of their learning plan, they were given a lower target and were supported to try and make it up to 100% by the end of their course. The Bursary Department was in Student Services so they worked with us and were able to record this so that when the bursary software ran at the end of each month it took the lower target into account.”

“In Forth Valley, if we identify learners who are carers normal procedure would involve the student providing some sort of evidence (usually a GP letter) and then contacting Finance Office and the Department whenever they are off in relation to this to allow us to authorise the absence. This would protect their funding. “

### NHS Board Carer Information Strategy (CIS)

All NHS Boards are working with partners to help identify and support young carers through the provision of information and advice, training, short breaks etc. For example:

- In partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Action for Children a young carers project is being piloted in Pointers Youth Café. The Young Carers Project will support the identification of young carers in the Lewis and Harris areas through a local advertising campaign, awareness raising in schools, colleges, youth groups and through the Pointers Youth café Facebook page. The project will provide advice about young carers rights, as well as supporting access to relevant services.

- The Young Carers Support Project in East Lothian provided 23 young carers and their families with support and regular respite during 2011-12. 34 young carers' club sessions were held with 362 attendances by young carers.