

**PE1470/K**

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Response from North Lanarkshire Council Learning and Leisure Services

Petition PE1470

Local Authorities questions

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

Unpaid carers of all ages face challenges in juggling the tasks with which they are faced. Young carers who are in full time education have the added responsibility which comes from fulfilling their educational needs while striving to care for someone with whom they live. There is no doubt that all carers who take on this responsibility are saving money for the Scottish economy, as mentioned in the petition.

Young carers who receive EMA are said to have had their EMA cut or stopped because of poor attendance, however staff who administer EMA within North Lanarkshire are currently unaware when a young person is actually a carer as this information does not feature in EMA applications. Steps are being taken to clarify when this is the case. It may well be that local authorities may need to make allowances for young carers who are affected in this way but at the same time, ensure supports are in place to minimise the risk of attendance falling.

Providing a young carers grant as opposed to EMA would not necessarily encourage a young person to stay on at school.

Within the current economic climate and recent welfare reforms, it is unlikely that the Scottish Government would be willing to fund a young carers grant. Significant cuts to budgets also mean that local authorities are unlikely to identify funding for such a grant.

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

Within North Lanarkshire, young carers are supported through Action for Children's Young Carers Project. The Project works in partnership with schools to raise awareness of the issues which young carers face in their caring role and enables school staff to identify and seek support for young carers.

Support required may be identified through assessment of the young person's additional support needs and/or by requesting assistance from the Young Carers Project.

Awareness raising sessions in schools have been crucial in highlighting the roles and responsibilities of young carers as well as assisting young carers to identify themselves as young carers which they may not have previously recognised.

All establishments in North Lanarkshire have been provided with information and resources available within the Princess Royal Trust Young Carers Toolkit which is predominantly aimed at identifying and supporting young carers in primary schools.

The Young Carers Strategy is a framework for action which highlights many of the issues addressed by the petitioner. The action points within the framework assist local authorities to improve practice and ensure supports are put in place which allow young carers to be children and young people first.

North Lanarkshire has a Young Carers Support Strategy Action Plan which is multi agency and outcome focused. Many of the actions are aimed at ensuring young carers are not disadvantaged because of the impact their caring role has on attendance, achievement and attainment.

The issues addressed by the petitioner can only improve when agencies work together around the young person and their family to maximise available supports.

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