

PE1470/N

Community Health & Care Partnership
Corporate Director: Brian Moore



Our Ref: AG/Young Carers

Your Ref:

Date: 28.05.13

Ravensraig Hospital
Kirn House
Inverkip Road
Greenock
PA16 9HA

Stuart Todd
Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament

Dear Stuart

Inverclyde Response to Public Petition PE1470

(Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to establish a Young Carer's Grant for carers in fulltime education or under the age of eighteen years)

Inverclyde CHCP welcomes the opportunity to comment on the issues raised within the petition and has consulted with young carers and the Inverclyde Young Carers Strategy Group prior to responding.

Question from the Committee for the Local Authority

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

Inverclyde's young carers can be affected by all the issues raised in the petition. Inverclyde Young Carers have directly reported the following issues :

- When caring has resulted in school or college being missed EMA has been withdrawn.
- Maintaining a college place that involves substantial travelling, this can be costly and the longer day caused by more travel can result in a young carer feeling stressed due to spending less time with the cared for person.
- When a young carer moves to her / his own home, there are issues in having sufficient income to travel to a college or work place, furnish a home or budget from a very limited income.

- When a young carer is bereaved, there are significant issues regarding being able to claim benefits or EMA, being potentially responsible for a tenancy.
- Some Inverclyde young carers have been affected by a lack of control of finances when parents / carers prioritise finances in a way that does not meet the need of the young carer.
- Young Carers in Inverclyde can variously be affected by the range of issues highlighted in the Petition. It is not clear how far these issues can be wholly resolved by the supports available from our young carer staff, from teachers, health or community learning and development or other staff.

Whilst many young carers will experience financial issues and financial hardship, this is not the case for all of our young carers. However, anecdotal evidence from agencies working with young carers is that most have been affected by economic hardship which has had a negative impact on their education and post school destinations. The roll out of welfare reform is likely to have further financial implications.

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

Inverclyde Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP) produced the first Carers Strategy for 2012 - 2015, incorporating the Young Carers Strategy, in December 2011.

The strategy is delivered by a multi agency Young Carer Strategy Group who report via our Community Planning Partnership and SOA Group 6 “Best Start In Life”.

Young carers’ needs will be supported in Inverclyde by:-

- Assessment of young people referred, by the Youth Support Team
- Young Carer activity groups
- An annual activity break for all young carers – this year the older group is fundraising for a trip abroad
- Community Learning and Development input to groups
- Links with Carers Centre re transitions at aged 18
- Arts / Media Project with Village Storytelling Centre
- Children and Families Social Work input where complex needs are identified
- Links with Carer Trust
- Links with Schools

Future Developmental work will be:-

- Inputs on young carers to all schools
- Information for young carers and agencies – leaflets and / or web based.
- Improved referral and assessment, better reflecting Getting It Right For Every Child
- Clearer focus on what all Inverclyde agencies can provide
- Future Young Carers Open Day
- Improve Young Carer Consultation
- Further develop transitions @ age 18
- Tracking education and leaver destinations via “ virtual school “
- Key worker system to better support young carers and link with families.

The view in Inverclyde is that when a young carer is identified, there can be available a range of supports that will improve the life of young carers and those who they care for.

We know that not all young carers are identified early in their life as a young carer. Getting It Right For Young Carers suggests that a large number of young carers remain unidentified.

A young carer grant would improve the lives of young carers who are in full time education or training and would mean that young carers are better enabled to reduce the inequalities they experience.

Other points

The petition refers to a 'grant', but it appears to mean a regular allowance. It is not clear at this early stage how this would be budgeted for or administered.

Qualifying criteria would need to be devised. It is likely that if an allowance is available for young carers, more young carers would be identified. Whilst this would be very welcome, there would have an impact on services supporting increased numbers of young carers.

Yours sincerely

Anne Glendinning
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Children & Families
Inverclyde CHCP