

PE1470/X

Mr. Chris Hynd
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP



21st August 2013

Dear Mr. Hynd,

Re: Responses to Public Petition PE1470

I would firstly like to thank all of the 21 local authorities and organisations who have taken the time to carefully consider this petition. The majority of responses are largely supportive of the Grant and I believe this speaks volumes, showing just how much vital help it would give to many Young Carers across Scotland. It is clearly shown by the responses that a Young Carers Grant is a much needed form of financial support that currently Young Carers cannot receive in any form. The responses did not raise any particularly new issues further to the previous responses to the petition, but the need for financial support for young carers was a recurring theme. This is further evidence that a Young Carers Grant would help the 100,000 Young Carers in Scotland who are crying out for financial help.

I believe that giving young carers this financial support will help in a variety of ways. It will in essence help to allow a Young Carer to live their life just as any other young person. Many Young Carers' financial situations are dire, due to one or both parents being out of work due to caring or needing to be cared for. Therefore every year more and more Young Carers are falling into poverty and struggling to get by on a day-to-day basis. A Young Carers Grant would allow young carers to continue with their education, as with financial help, these devoted individuals would not feel forced to leave school, college or university to get a job and provide for their family. It would also see Young Carers who wished to start building a career the ability to do so, as many Young Carers struggle to work full time and support their families.

The Young Carers Grant would provide the opportunity for a Young Carer to work part time, care for their family and still be financially stable. The Young Carers Grant would provide a Young Carer with many flexible avenues to choose where they would like to be in life and give them the ability to do so. This in essence would put a stop to Young Carers being forced into making life choices that they may not actually want, but do so to support their families.

In conclusion I would like to again thank the Committee and all of the organisations and local authorities for providing the petition with a great deal of support. I believe that this is time for change. Although actions have been taken to help Young Carers there is still nothing to support them financially. Young Carers do the same job as an adult Carer, so they should be provided the same support to help them carry on with their caring duties. I also believe that it is important that we address this issue swiftly, to allow fast, effective support to the young people

who provide crucial care and save the Government a considerable amount of money every year. I call on the Scottish Government to reconsider their position and introduce a Young Carers Grant in light of the strong support from local authorities and Carers organisations, and for the reasons I have outlined in my evidence.

Yours sincerely,

Lauren King MSYP