

Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities:

Ideas and Practice for Universities to Help Student
Carers Access and Succeed in Higher Education

England version



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Acknowledgements

Carers Trust would like to thank members of the National Network of Universities Supporting Young Adult Carers who have supported and contributed to this resource:

- Professor Jo Aldridge, Loughborough University
- Philip Bakstad, Liverpool John Moores University
- Professor Saul Becker, University of Birmingham
- Vanessa Emslie, York St John University
- Melissa Mead, University of Oxford
- Dr Terri Sandison MBE, The University of Winchester
- Emma Szembek, The University of Nottingham
- Yvonne Turnbull, Liverpool John Moores University
- Kirsten Wythe, University of Southampton.

Carers Trust would also like to thank the other universities who have contributed case studies and information to this resource. We would especially like to thank the carers who have contributed their stories and quotes which have grounded this resource in real experiences.

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Foreword

NUS is extremely proud to have worked with Carers Trust on this vital resource which aims to guide universities in improving support for student carers across the UK.

When NUS launched the Learning with Care report, in September 2013, which is the first ever national piece of research into the experiences of student carers, we discovered a lack of support for student carers. Student carers are a majorly under-represented group on campuses and although more than three quarters of those surveyed had explained their caring role to their college or university, nearly half (45%) of them reported that despite this, there was still no one there to give them support.

We believe that increased understanding and awareness of the issues which this vulnerable group face is integral to providing effective support. It is key to the success of making education accessible to student carers and making institutions a firm support base. At NUS, we're working towards improving the representation of student carers in education by creating the structures to enable effective campaigning for student carers that is led by student carers. However, in order to accomplish this, we must build strong links together with universities and local authorities to provide joined up support for this vulnerable student group.

We would encourage all institutions to implement the recommendations and ideas from this new Carers Trust resource and work to develop better support services to improve the lives of young adult carers accessing education.

Susuana Antubam

NUS National Women's Officer

Statements of support



Young adult carers' opportunities are often restricted. They don't have the chances in life that many of our young people and children take for granted; their education is often disrupted, their achievements at GCSE are lower than many of their peers, their options to study at university are restricted because of the practical and emotional demands of their caring responsibilities. Despite these barriers, the transformational effect of learning is powerful and well evidenced.

Through its Time to be Heard campaign, Carers Trust has led the way in raising awareness of young adult carers' needs and improving the support that they receive from services. NIACE is very pleased to be able to support this resource, which really highlights the crucial role that universities have to play in enabling these remarkable young people to lead full and active lives, in their journey to adulthood.

NIACE

If young adult carers know what support there is at university, the more likely they are to access it. There is certainly a need for a support worker/funding at university to provide essential support with the massive transition that young adult carers face when going to university.

I did not think that I would be able to go to university. However, after knowing my parents would be able to cope and I could come home at weekends – that encouraged me to go. But I will admit it was incredibly hard to live away from home and that Student Services need to support young adult carers more.

I hope that universities will use this resource to enable them to gain a greater understanding of what young adult carers face and the ways they can be supported. Young adult carers need tailored support otherwise they will never go to university and have the same experiences as their peers.

Alex, young adult carer



This is an excellent new resource to help support student carers at university.

Having caring responsibilities, while also progressing through university, presents an enormous challenge for many students.

This guidance will help universities to target support for young adult carers.

From ensuring they apply to study in the first place, to making sure they get the maximum benefit from their university experience.

Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive of Universities UK



UCAS is committed to supporting the progression of all learners to higher education, particularly those from a disadvantaged background. We welcome the creation of this toolkit and believe it will provide a useful resource for higher education providers as they seek to support young carers.

We look forward to working with Carers Trust in the future to enhance the information and advice that we provide for young carers and higher education providers.

UCAS

Introduction

There are around seven million carers in the UK¹ and this figure is rising. Three in five people will be carers at some point in their lives in the UK. It is estimated that by 2030 the number of carers in the UK will have increased by around 60% (Carers UK, 2001). The 2011 Census figures from England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland show there are more than 375,000 young adult carers in the UK aged 14–25, who are providing support and assistance to their families and friends. For a young person who has caring responsibilities, trying to transition to, through and beyond university, can be extremely challenging and for some a barrier.

Students with caring responsibilities are included in the National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education (Higher Education Funding Council for England, Office for Fair Access, 2014), in relation to making provision more flexible and accessible to learners from under-represented groups. Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities will increase awareness of this particular group of students and their specific needs and aims to support universities to address the challenges student carers face. It draws together some of the good practice universities have already begun to develop and makes recommendations for how universities can support students across the student life cycle. This includes widening participation, applications, admissions and student support while a student carer is at university.

Throughout this resource, different terms have been used to describe the same student group – young adult carers, student carers and students with caring responsibilities. The term young adult carer has been used for all young people aged 14–25 with caring responsibilities.

¹ The number we have used is our estimate of the number of carers across the UK based on the Census figures. The number of carers is fluid and can only ever be an estimate for the following reasons: People can become a carer at any time. People can become a carer for a short period of time to support someone following an accident, at the end of their life or during an illness, for example. People do not always see themselves as a carer and do not necessarily recognise their own needs. Some people shy away from having a label attached to them.



This resource focusses specifically on young adult carers, however, many of the issues experienced by mature students who are carers will be similar. When developing approaches for supporting young adult carers, universities might also like to consider carers of all ages – both students and staff.

It is hoped that this resource will further drive the momentum for acknowledging and supporting this student group within universities.

We hope that it will inspire and assist universities to develop their own approaches and that the good practice already taking place will become more consistent across higher education.

This will ensure that students who are caring for others – who in many instances have overcome very difficult circumstances and who will have acquired extremely valuable skills – are able to reach their potential and succeed.

Daniel Phelps, Project and Development Manager
Carers Trust

Although some sections within this publication are specific to England, many of the ideas and practice are relevant to universities across the UK.

About Carers Trust

Carers Trust is a major new charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, **unpaid**, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

We do this with Network Partners – a unique network of 116 independent carers centres, 55 Crossroads Care schemes and 99 young carers services. Together we are united by a shared vision for carers – to make sure that quality assured information, advice and practical support are available to all carers across the UK.

If your university would like to promote how it is supporting student carers, Carers Trust can add details to the Universities list at <https://professionals.carers.org/study>. For information email: ycteam@carers.org.

Chapter 1:

Young adult carers and support across the student life cycle

This chapter will:

- Outline who young adult carers are.
- Highlight challenges faced by young adult carers and how these impact on their education.
- Set out the importance and value of recognising and supporting young adult carers as a specific group (including duties under the Care Act to support young adult carers through transition).
- Outline how support for student carers can be funded.

Who are young adult carers?

Young adult carers are young people aged 14–25 who care, **unpaid**, for a family member or friend with an illness or disability, mental health condition or an addiction. While there are no exact figures on the number of young adult carers in the UK, the 2011 Census figures for the UK show there are more than 375,000 young adult carers in the UK aged 14–25, who are providing support and assistance to their families and friends.

The range and scale of caring will vary greatly but may include:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping.
- Physical care, such as helping someone out of bed.
- Personal care, such as helping someone dress.
- Helping to give someone their medication.
- Managing the family budget.
- Collecting prescriptions and managing medication.
- Helping someone communicate.
- Looking after brothers and sisters.
- Providing emotional support.

Providing emotional support, particularly where the person in need of care has mental health or substance misuse issues, can be very challenging and often involves sporadic increased and unplanned peaks of caring responsibilities which are very difficult to balance with everyday commitments.

Young adult carers – Who are they? What do they do?



Who are young adult carers?

Young adult carers are young people aged **14–25** who care, **unpaid**, for a friend or family member who could not cope without their support.



How many young adult carers are there?

- There are over 375,000 young adult carers in the UK.
- They are likely to be in every school, college, university and workplace.

Young adult carers care for someone:

- With an illness or disability.
- With a mental health condition.
- Who misuses drugs or alcohol.

What might a young adult carer do?

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping.
- Physical care, such as helping someone out of bed.
- Emotional support.
- Personal care, such as helping someone dress or go to the toilet.
- Managing the family budget and collecting prescriptions.
- Helping to give someone their medication.
- Helping someone communicate.
- Looking after brothers and sisters.



“I want college to understand I’m a carer.”

Being a young adult carer can have a big impact on the things that are important to growing up



- It can affect a young person’s health, social life and self confidence – over 50% reported a mental health problem.
- Many struggle to juggle their education, working life and caring role which can cause pressure and stress.
- Recent research on young adult carers who were no longer in education showed their highest qualifications were GCSEs grade D–G.
- 29% had dropped out of college/university because of their caring role. This is four times greater than the national average for degree courses.

Young adult carers should have:

- Support that gives them the same opportunities as their friends such as being able to:
 - Go to school, college or university and complete their studies.
 - Get a job.
 - Have a social life and be independent.
 - Have support for the person they care for.



“I lost over half of my hours at work because I care for my dad. Is that fair?”

Information and support

www.youngcarersmatter.org www.carers.org/timetobeheard www.youngminds.org.uk



You can download this infographic from the Carers Trust Professionals website at https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/young_adult_carers_who_are_they_final.pdf

Research on young adult carers

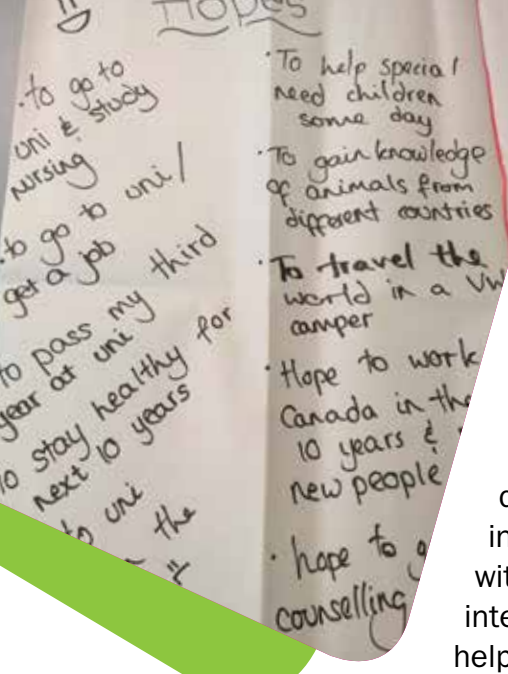
There is a limited amount of information about young adult carers at university. This is largely because they often remain hidden and services and support are not generally targeted at this group. Carers Trust therefore commissioned The University of Nottingham to undertake research to examine the experiences and aspirations of young adult carers in relation to school, further and higher education, and work. A total of 362 people viewed the survey; and responses from 295 young adult carers aged 14–25 were analysed. Of those 295 young adult carers, 61 were still at school, 101 were in further or higher education and 77 were either in work or not in education, employment, or training (NEET) (Sempik, J and Becker, S, 2013, 2014 and 2014a).

This research is part of a wider campaign that has been launched by Carers Trust called Time to be Heard; a campaign to give young adult carers a voice to tell everyone who they are, what they do and why it is important (see www.carers.org/timetobeheard). A Carers Trust report draws on the findings of The University of Nottingham research and sets out the key recommendations for Government and public bodies to secure a positive future for the UK's young adult carers (Alexander, C, 2014). This resource for universities focuses on what universities can do to help with that aim.



“In every university there will be students who are combining their higher education with caring responsibilities. Some of these students will be returning home daily to provide regular care; others will return at weekends, but will be phoning home each day, while providing care at a distance. These young adult carers face particular barriers – in getting to university in the first place, and then making the best of their university experience and opportunities. Our research shows that many will struggle with the conflicting demands of learning and caring and some will have to give up their degree programme because of the strains involved. This is a significant personal loss to young adult carers and their families, and also to the higher education system. It is at the heart of issues concerned with fair access, social justice, widening participation, educational opportunity and social mobility. Young adult carers need a level playing field, in terms of getting to university and then a positive experience which enables them to flourish and to achieve – just as we would hope and expect for every student from every background. This resource offers guidance, good practice and case studies that provide a purposeful way forward.”

Professor Saul Becker, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Social Sciences, University of Birmingham and **Joe Sempik**, Research Fellow, Faculty of Social Sciences, The University of Nottingham (authors of the Time to be Heard research).



Specific needs and challenges

Due to the impact of their caring experiences, young adult carers are considered vulnerable just as other marginalised groups of young people are such as care leavers, those who live in areas of deprivation, or who experience social exclusion. All of these groups may experience similar difficulties and challenges in making successful transitions into further or higher education. Vulnerable groups are defined within health and social care as those who need formal interventions from health and social care services or who need help in decision-making processes.

Vulnerability has also been assigned to groups of people who lack the capacity for self-protection or for developing resilience or effective coping strategies (Parrott, L, Jacobs, G and Roberts, D, 2008). However, vulnerability is a complex and shifting concept and it may be the case that some people, including young adult carers, would not consider themselves vulnerable at all (for further discussion on this topic, see Aldridge, J 2015). The Care Act 2014 states that: 'A young carer becomes vulnerable when their caring role risks impacting upon their emotional or physical wellbeing and their prospects in education and life'. We know that young adult carers do need additional help and support both in making successful transitions into further and higher education and while they are at university. This resource is intended to enable universities to support these processes.

Targeted support for young adult carers

The difficulties young adult carers experience as a result of their caring role can have a significant negative impact on their health and wellbeing, relationships, education and future careers. While young adult carers can gain a range of positive skills, characteristics and capabilities as a result of their caring responsibilities, a family needs to have the appropriate support in place so that young adults do not have to take on roles that are excessive and detrimental to their outcomes.

The number of dedicated support services for young carers (those in primary and secondary school) has increased significantly over the last 15 years. Many of these services now deliver a whole family approach and work within schools, in addition to providing respite opportunities, social opportunities and emotional support. Conversely, support for young adult carers has been limited or entirely absent. However, this absence has been recognised by both the Government and the voluntary sector and, along with an increased understanding of the specific needs of this group, has recently begun driving an increase in services for young adult carers. For example, the Carers Trust's About Time programme of work, funded by The Co-operative Charity of the Year, is grant funding the development of over 50 UK projects devoted to supporting young adult carers as they transition into adulthood. Universities can therefore draw upon the

expertise of local young adult carers services and those in the voluntary sector to solidify the support that they provide for young adult carers.

Why it's important for your university to support young adult carers

There are likely to be significant numbers of students at your university who are carers; some will be unknown to services, some may have recently become carers and some will have been caring for many years. Just making it to university may have been a huge challenge since having caring responsibilities can seriously affect a young adult carer's future wellbeing and life chances.

A report by the Audit Commission, found that the likelihood of young adult carers being NEET for six months or more, was twice that of their peers (Audit Commission, 2010). Disadvantage can start early, with young adult carers having significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, (the equivalent to nine grades lower overall) than their peers (The Children's Society, 2013).

Many young adult carers struggle with the decision of whether to go to university and leave behind the person they care for. Many report feeling guilty for passing on the caring role to younger siblings. For some young adult carers this may be enough to prevent them from going to university, or restrict their choice of university and course to enable them to stay at or closer to home.

Previous research (Becker, F and Becker, S, 2008) has revealed that young adult carers often struggle at college and university because of their caring role. It found that some young adult carers will continue to care at a distance or return home regularly to help family members and that consequently their overall experience of university life can be very different from that of their peers.

Research on the experiences of a young adult carers at college and university (Sempik, J and Becker, S, 2014a) found that 45 out of the 101 young adult carers who responded reported having a mental health problem and 129 of all the young adult carers who responded to the survey (total sample size of 285) also reported having a mental health problem. While this finding could be due to a number of factors, it highlights that this student group is likely to have a greater need for student support. In addition, 14 out of 86 young adult carers surveyed were concerned that they might have to drop out of college or university. Those who reported that they found college or university difficult had significantly greater caring responsibilities than those who did not.

Risk of drop-out

Research on young adult carers and employment (Sempik, J and Becker, S, 2014) found that of the 38 respondents who had been to college and university, 11 had dropped out because of their caring role. While this is the finding of a small sample of young adult carers, this drop-out rate is four times greater than the national average for degree courses. This reflects the findings from a study of student carers carried out by the NUS which revealed that only 36% of student carers felt able to balance their commitments (such as work, study and

family/relationships), compared with 53% of students who did not have caring responsibilities (NUS, 2013). By ensuring the identification of young adult carers at university, those who may be more likely to drop out of university, or are at risk of not fulfilling their potential, can be supported through early intervention.

Implementing the support needed across the student life cycle; from widening participation, applications, admissions and student support through to their successful transition into employment or further study, ensures practical assistance is in place.

By responding to the individual needs of young adult carers, universities can support them to fully participate in their courses and in university life and to reach their potential, while balancing their caring roles.

How universities can fund the support they offer for young adult carers

Access Agreements

Access Agreements

Through Access Agreements, approved by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), each university sets out the widening participation activities and collaborative partnerships that will facilitate the progression and success of people from groups which are under-represented in higher education. Examples of these groups are identified in OFFA's guidance. OFFA now encourages universities to consider the services they provide to support young carers and how these might align with or be strengthened through Access Agreements. In addition, universities are expected to pay due regard to equality and diversity in their plans, therefore giving credence to activity which supports those who may suffer indirect discrimination through their caring responsibilities for those with disability or long-term ill-health.

For universities engaging with young carers or young adult carers through widening participation, costs can be included in Access Agreement expenditure as universities have flexibility to decide which under-represented groups to include. There are also creative ways of attracting external funding, or support in kind, for example through collaborative projects with local authorities, young carer/young adult carer groups or with other universities and colleges.

See the OFFA information page for universities and colleges at www.offa.org.uk/universities-and-colleges/.

Student Opportunity Funding

For welfare or related support for young adult carers already studying, costs (for English universities) can be allocated to Student Opportunity Funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Student unions can also be asked to include young adult carers in welfare support.

See the HEFCE website at www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/wp/current/howfund/.

Discretionary funds

In the case of student carers who are experiencing exceptional unforeseen hardship, universities may disburse non-repayable discretionary sums from their Hardship Funds, providing that the student has applied for all other funding available. There is also potential for setting up a specific bursary for student carers, or for including student carers in the target groups for existing bursaries or scholarships (see Chapter 5: Providing student support to young adult carers, for examples of student carer bursaries).

Financial and social reasons for supporting young adult carers

There are strong social and financial reasons for universities to ensure that young adult carers are given the best possible chance of successfully completing their course. ‘Student carers are highly motivated and dedicated to their courses, but they have elevated financial hardship, decreased well-being, and their support needs are often misunderstood or ignored by their institutions’ (NUS, 2013).

Targeting this significantly sized population of young people through widening participation should increase the numbers applying to and reaching university. Once at university, supporting young adult carers with appropriate and timely support will help counter the disadvantage they face because of their caring responsibilities and provide these students with the best possible chance of successfully completing their courses. In addition, support will assist with overall retention rates and reduce the likelihood of accompanying loss of funding.

Government guidance

Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 (which comes into force in April 2015), simplifies, consolidates and improves existing legislation: ‘Putting carers on an equal legal footing to those they care for and putting their needs at the centre of the legislation’ (Secretary of State for Health, 2013). Under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 a carer is recognised as someone who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or child.

There is a new duty on local authorities to ensure that carers receive an assessment on the appearance of need for support, regardless of their financial resources or those of the person that they care for. The assessment must

consider whether the carer is willing, and able, to continue to care and have regard to whether the carer is working, training or in education, or wishes to do so.

The Care Act also addresses the transition period between being a young carer (a carer under 18) and an adult carer. A local authority must provide a transition assessment for young carers and should help raise their aspirations and achieve the outcomes that matter to them.

Local authorities must cooperate with relevant external agencies including local general practices, housing providers and educational institutions. This duty is reciprocal. Where a young person or carer wishes to attend a higher or further education institution, local authorities should help them identify a suitable institution as part of transition planning (if they have not done so already). Once an offer has been accepted, local authorities should ensure the relevant institution is made aware as soon as possible of the young person's or young adult carer's needs and desired outcomes and discuss a plan for meeting them.

For more information on the Care Act 2014 see www.carers.org/care-act.

The full Care and Support Statutory Guidance can be viewed at www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366104/43380_23902777_Care_Act_Book.pdf

Chapter 2:

Establishing foundations for supporting student carers

This chapter will:

- Set out an example of a commitment of support for student carers.
- Provide an overview of how universities can embed a structured approach to supporting young adult carers.
- Provide an overview of how universities can support individual students.

Example of a student carer commitment

The example Student Carer Commitment below has been developed to support universities to embed and promote support for young adult carers. It can be used as a basis for the development of policy and support mechanisms and can be included in university promotional literature.

Student Carer Commitment: Commitment to students with caring responsibilities across the university life cycle

[Your] University recognises that a significant number of students (as well as staff) will have caring responsibilities for a family member or friend and recognises the unique challenges faced by these students to both reach university and succeed in higher education.

In order to offset these challenges, the University specifically seeks to:

- Support students with caring responsibilities entering the university through targeted widening participation and/or marketing activities.
- Monitor participation by young carers or young adult carers in widening participation activities and the number subsequently entering university.
- Raise awareness of the needs of this group of students with all relevant members of staff.
- Enable this student group to make the most of their time in higher education, including the successful completion of their courses.



“I wish to become a social worker so it is vital that I attend university.”

College student

- Work alongside the NUS to support student carers' health and wellbeing.
- Work with local authorities to enable them to fulfil legal duties to young adult carers under the Care Act 2014.
- Work with other external agencies such as carers services and health services to support student carers.

In order to fulfil its commitment to students with caring responsibilities [your] University will seek to implement recommendations set out within Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities (see full list of recommendations in Appendix 1).

Developing a policy for young adult carers

Carers Trust would encourage all universities to have a clear policy for student carers, either in the form of a separate policy or by integrating student carers into existing policies (for example, Safeguarding or Equality and Diversity policies), in order to provide structured support to students with caring responsibilities. It is important that universities offer flexibility to young adult carers so that they can balance their studies with their caring role.

The University of Glasgow's policy for student carers

The University of Glasgow has a dedicated policy for student carers. A student carer is defined as: 'Any current or prospective student who has sole or shared responsibility for a relative, close friend or neighbour because they are ill, have a disability, are experiencing mental distress or affected by substance abuse'.

The policy includes the University's statement on support for student carers, the roles and responsibilities of both staff, students and the university, guidance for staff on supporting student carers, and sources of information and help.

For more information on the University of Glasgow's policy see http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_199270_en.pdf

The University of Salford – We Care: Policy for Students with Caring Responsibilities

In December 2014, the University of Salford launched its policy for student carers. The policy provides guidance for staff and students on the support available for students who are combining their studies with a caring role.

Further information on the support provided to student carers contained in this policy can be found in Chapter 5: Providing student support for young adult carers.

The Open University in Wales' work with student carers

The Open University in Wales has been working with student carers since 2010. Its original project had five main strands to it:

1. Developing information specifically aimed at student carers.
2. Working through carers groups and networks to disseminate information.
3. Working in direct partnership with a smaller number of carers groups to complement their informal learning programmes and provide enhanced support through taster sessions and face-to-face study clubs.
4. Developing a bursary programme to help towards the cost of course fees for student carers who were not eligible for other financial support.
5. Sharing best practice both internally within the university and externally to the wider sector.

A report on this original project is available at <http://www.open.ac.uk/wales/sites/www.open.ac.uk.wales/files/files/ecms/wales-pa/web-content/carers-project-evaluation-2014-ENG.pdf>

Including student carers in your university's Access Agreement

Carers Trust also encourages universities to include student carers in their Access Agreement so that these students are formally incorporated into widening participation activities.

The University of Winchester Access Agreement

The University of Winchester 2015–16 Access Agreement states the following priority commitment within its strategic approach to access:

'To work with Hampshire Children's Services, Carers Trust, The Children's Society and with voluntary sector projects to support the confidence, aspirations and progression of young carers.'

The evaluation plan includes a commitment to monitor the number of widening participation participants who are young carers.

The equality and diversity section makes the following commitment:

'We deliberately set out to recruit a diverse range of Student HE Ambassadors, including males (who are under-represented at the university), those with disabilities, students from a background in care, young carers, students from minority ethnic groups and mature students.'

Model frameworks

In order to help universities implement the Student Carer Commitment above, Carers Trust has developed some model frameworks for implementing a structured approach to supporting student carers.

Framework 1: A model for setting up a framework of support

- Acknowledging the challenges faced by student carers and developing a high-level commitment.
- Assigning a university lead/champion to support student carers.
- Targeting young carers/young adult carers through widening participation activity.
- Ensuring relevant staff are aware of the issues and how the university can support this group.
- Ensuring support systems are promoted and accessible to student carers.

Framework 2: A model for working with student carers

- Identifying student carers at university.
- Establishing and initiating the involvement of staff and other professionals.
- If required, initiating wider support for the student from local services.

These are only models, so they can be adapted to suit the needs and structure of your university, but will hopefully serve as a helpful guide to the kinds of actions you can take, or provisions and services you can put in place, in order to support students at your university who have caring responsibilities.

A model for setting up a framework of support

First phase: Sign up and vision

- Acknowledgement and understanding of the importance of supporting young adult carers, reflected and promoted in a university commitment to this group.
- Inclusion of young carers/young adult carers in the university Access Agreement.

Develop a standalone young adult carers policy or guidance, as appropriate.

Amend other relevant policies/literature/website to include young adult carers, including widening participation activity.

Second phase: Introduce a university lead/champion and team for student carers

- Assign a university lead/champion to work across departments and provide a cohesive system for students with caring responsibilities.
- Assign a team, if appropriate, to work alongside the university lead/champion.

Develop an action plan for:

Widening participation through partnership work

Find out if there is a local young adult carers service that can support your university and consider working with local authorities, schools, colleges and other universities through widening participation.

Third phase: Awareness and support systems

Awareness training for *all relevant* members of staff, to include personal tutors, student support, student widening participation and recruitment/admissions staff.

Ongoing awareness training for *all relevant* members of staff included in professional development.

Set up support systems

- Information for young adult carers available in prospectus, at fresher's week and in university resources (for example, website, leaflets).
- Practical and pastoral support for young adult carers through Student Services and Student Union (including effective communication systems).
- Financial support available for young adult carers – see Chapter 5 for information.

Fourth phase: Identification, support and monitoring of young adult carers

- Refer to: A model for working with student carers.

Fifth phase: Monitoring and revising of commitment, policy, provision and action plans.

A model for working with student carers

Phase 1: Identification of student carers

Awareness of a student being a young adult carer through information provided in application (for example, in reference, personal statement or via direct contact with applicant or staff from school/college), at enrolment, or via self-identification to Student Services or tutors.

- Include a question to identify young adult carers on enrolment form/online enrolment.
- Provide information about support for young adult carers at open days, in Student Services reception areas and in Student Union.
- Post intranet messages at the start of and throughout the year to encourage young adult carers to self-identify to Student Services.

If appropriate, initiate safeguarding.

Phase 2: Establish involvement of staff and other professionals

For example:

- University lead/champion for student carers.
- Personal tutor.
- Student mentor/representatives.
- Student Union.
- Student advisers.

Phase 3: Initiate university support systems

- Flexible learning and support.
- Personalised plan.
- Coursework/exam support.
- Peer support group.
- Young adult carers society.
- Staff to talk to/counselling.
- Emergency or crisis plan.
- Career advice service to support transition after university.

Phase 4: Initiate wider support from local services

To support the student:

- Use a multi-agency joint approach, for example with a young adult carers service, adult carers service, counselling service. Carers services will be able to support with assessing the student's needs in relation to their caring and if necessary, initiating support for their family.

To support the student's family: (better support for the student's family will help the student)

- Help student to access support for their family:
 - Adult social care.
 - Health services.
 - Carers services.
- Support student to request an assessment of their needs as a carer from their local authority. (An assessment should look at the needs of the whole family including any siblings who are caring).

Phase 5: Ensure ongoing monitoring

Student and family situations may change rapidly. Ongoing formal and informal monitoring is therefore important.

Recommendations

- Develop and promote a commitment for young adult carers.
- Establish a policy for young adult carers or integrate the commitments to young adult carers into existing policies.
- Introduce a university lead/champion and team for young adult carers with the role of overseeing the implementation of policy for carers.
- Provide awareness training on young adult carers for all relevant members of staff, to include personal tutors, student support, student widening participation and recruitment/admissions staff.
- Include young adult carers in your Access Agreement and widening participation.
- Work with local authorities to enable them to fulfil their legal duties to young adult carers under the Care Act 2014.
- Incorporate your university's support for carers into your local authority's strategy for carers and young carers.

Chapter 3:

Reaching young carers through widening participation

This chapter will:

- Outline barriers to going to university experienced by young adult carers.
- Highlight the importance of targeting young and young adult carers through widening participation.
- Present case studies where widening participation in some universities is already targeting young and young adult carers.
- Illustrate the value of partnering with local services for young carers and young adult carers.



“There needs to be more support so we can better ourselves and not be constantly worrying about the person we care for because it can take over and be detrimental to our health and wellbeing alongside our aspirations.”


College student

Barriers to reaching university

Despite young adult carers often experiencing educational disadvantage from an early age and attaining significantly lower grades at GCSE level than their peers, research conducted for Carers Trust (Sempik, J and Becker, S, 2013) found that 44 out of 52 young adult carers who responded to the survey intended to go to university or college.

However, despite the finding in this research that the majority of young adult carers surveyed intended to go to college or university, many young adult carers do not think it is an option. The same research found that:

- 24% of the young adult carers surveyed thought they could not afford to go to college or university, and 41% were not sure whether they could afford it.
- Only 13 out of 49 young adult carers knew that they could get financial support through a scholarship, while 31% thought that they could not and 43% were unsure.
- Less than half (27 of 59 young adult carers) thought they had received good career advice and only 11 of 58 respondents thought that it took their caring role into account.



Young adult carers often report experiencing feelings of guilt about leaving home and sometimes the emotional pressure and demands that some families have of young adult carers can make it especially hard to leave (Becker, F and Becker, S, 2008).

“

“I sometimes feel selfish for having aspirations but I know that in the end I’ll be doing a good thing, it’s just a battle to even be able to get to that point and know that while there [at university] my mother is safe.”

College student

Rachel is 19 and an only child in a single parent family. She is the primary carer for her mum who is very ill and struggles to work due to her physical and mental health. Rachel is currently at college and has hopes to go to university, but faces many challenges in order to get there:

“I love being able to look after my mum and make a difference but many people don’t understand how physically and mentally taxing it can be and this has led to me feeling belittled in school and college.

Often I’m up in the night because my mum is upset and screaming and shouting so I need to calm her down. The lack of sleep along with financial and schooling worries and the fact that teachers aren’t very understanding amounts to a lot stress that has often made me quite ill and suffer from migraines, which a lot of people do not understand and think that it’s just a headache. This has been incredibly difficult in my situation as it has just meant things got even harder for me at home – because being ill has meant I’ve gotten further behind with the housework and school work which just turned into a vicious circle.

I wish to become a social worker so it is vital that I attend university. Many people are denied the future they could have and deserve because they need to provide and help their families now. Many have to look in the present tense only and what will help them get by, even though by going into higher education they will help themselves and their family in the long run.

I worry how my mum will be when I leave and if those put in place to help her will be able to meet her needs and be patient with her etc and if there will be enough funding for people to look after her sufficiently.”

Adam is studying at university. He cares for his mum who is deaf. Adam had to make considerations when attending university that most students do not have to think about:

“I made sure that I wasn’t too far away from home, so that I could come home at any time if there was a problem that I might be able to help with. Since my sister went to university, I have returned home more often as she isn’t there to help my mother if ever she needs it on a daily basis.

I have had to come home more often than a lot of other students. Some don’t return in term time at all. I try and return every three weeks at the very least, often more. I do not seem to have suffered from doing this too much as I have continued to maintain high grades during my time at university. However, I did transfer universities after year one – something that may have been influenced by returning home frequently.”

Vanessa graduated with a 2:1 degree from university. Her mum has bipolar disorder and she has been her primary carer since she was 13. The considerations that Vanessa had to make when attending university were different to that of her peers without caring responsibilities. A counsellor even suggested that she should not go to university because of her caring role:

“When I was 16, I was seeing a professional counsellor, who knew all about the help I was giving my mother. She told me that I wouldn’t be able to go to university because of this responsibility – not to even think about it! I never went to see her again; I made sure to be realistic, as well as optimistic, about the situation.

Therefore, although I was passionate about science, when I found out that these degrees required doing a lot of hours in classes I decided to do English Literature because I could spend more time at home. I also chose to attend the university in my home town. My so-called success is also because I was lucky that I got some very good advice when I needed it. It didn’t happen because there were systems in place to help me.”

Vanessa would like more recognition from universities:

“Most carers view their caring role as ‘normal’. For me, as the carer to my mum, I can now look back and see that that wasn’t ‘normal’ at all. That the role reversal of parent and child was incredibly difficult for both me and my mum. The other untruth that I believed was that it was shameful. I would like universities to show respect for carers and not just see caring as ‘another home issue’.

These barriers – perceived and real – experienced by young adult carers highlight the importance of universities targeting this specific group through widening participation activities and ensuring that caring responsibilities do not prevent these young people from aspiring to and reaching university. One way of tracking the number of young carers participating in your university’s widening participation activities is through the Higher Education Access Tracker.

Subscribing to the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT)

The HEAT database is a monitoring and evaluation tool. Higher education institutions can subscribe to it for a fee. The database provides a web-based data capture system that tracks student engagement in widening participation activities delivered by each university that has subscribed. The system is being rolled out nationally so that all universities wishing to subscribe will be able to benefit from the service.

To contribute to the database, universities collect information about their widening participation participants – (for example, those attending taster days or residential programmes, or those involved in mentoring) – by means of in-house application and data consent forms. Characteristics of participants are recorded on the forms and then entered into the collaborative database, which enables them to be tracked (via the Higher Education Statistics Agency and UCAS) to find out if they enter higher education in the future. The database fields include one for young carers, so universities may choose to ask those who participate in all their widening participation activity if they are young carers. This means that even if a university does not run bespoke young carers events, it can still capture data on the number of young carers it is reaching through more generic widening participation and track their progression. Furthermore, schools and colleges can be encouraged to identify and select young carers to attend university widening participation – especially if the application form lists ‘young carer’ as a target characteristic.

Over the next few pages there are a number of case studies that set out some widening participation initiatives already in place in universities from across the country. The case studies look at five areas of widening participation work in which universities can be involved:

1. Partnership work between a university and a local carers service.
2. Widening participation through involvement at events and festivals.
3. University widening participation events and programmes targeting young carers and young adult carers.
4. Collaboration between universities.
5. Engaging current university students in widening participation activity.

Using STROBE to track applicants

STROBE is a service offered by UCAS that allows providers of widening participation and outreach activity to track their participants (with their consent) into the UCAS applications system. STROBE takes individual level information about participants on such activities and reports their application cycle outcomes at an aggregate level. STROBE also has the facility to report separately for different subgroups, for example carers.

Partnership work between a university and a local carers service

Many areas have either a young carers, young adult carers, or adult carers service. The majority are voluntary sector services, while others are run by local authorities. Developing partnership arrangements with these services is a useful way of developing both widening participation activities and linking students to dedicated support.

Formal links between The University of Winchester and Winchester Young Carers Project

The University of Winchester became formally linked to the Winchester Young Carers Project in 2010. The Winchester Young Carers Project is a successful local charity supporting young carers aged 8–17. As well as raising awareness of young carers, providing support for young carers and their families and offering activities through club nights and social outings, the project also aims to help young carers access support to help them succeed in education.

As well as participating in continued widening participation at the project's club nights, the university runs taster days and hosts an annual residential for young carers from the Winchester Young Carers Project. This has now expanded to include participants from young carers projects across Hampshire. In 2014, the project was also awarded its first Community Star Award at a graduation ceremony. As well as recognising the work of the Winchester Young Carers Project, the Award also included a donation from the university.

Some of the young carers who participated in the university's widening participation between 2010 and 2012 are now studying successfully at the university.

For more information about this partnership work see The University of Winchester's dedicated web page on widening participation for young adult carers:

<http://www.winchester.ac.uk/aboutus/communityengagement/wideningparticipation/young-adult-carers/Pages/Young-Adult-Carers.aspx>



The University of Oxford's partnership work

The University of Oxford's Compass Programme has led to close relationships with Oxfordshire County Council's Young Carer's team, the Spurgeon's Young Carers Project, local state schools and a range of other partnerships. In addition to providing guidance during the planning stages of the Compass programme, the teams from Oxfordshire County Council and the Spurgeon's Project actively refer participants to the programme and provide support and information during activities for parents and students when appropriate. A Young Carers Schools Standard that is run by Oxfordshire County Council, in association with the Spurgeon's Young Carers Project, now requires schools to illustrate that they are making attempts to put young carers forward for the Compass Programme. The Compass team has also been involved in the pastoral care training session for Oxfordshire County Council's Attainment Project which has proved an effective means of raising the profile of school-aged carers in Oxfordshire.

Brunel University's work with Hillingdon Young Carers

The Widening Participation Office at Brunel University, London, has been working with Hillingdon Young Carers, a Network Partner of Carers Trust, since May 2009. The university recognised that young carers often shoulder considerable responsibilities which impact on their educational attainment and the likelihood of their progression to university. It therefore identified that they deserve additional help and encouragement to fulfil their potential and are eligible for support from the Widening Participation Student Opportunity allocation devolved to higher education institutions by the HEFCE.

Young carers have participated in the university's two-day residential programme every year for the past five years to enhance skills, raise aspirations and provide an insight into university life. The programme has included input from the local authority which has run an information, advice and guidance session delivered by a Youth Support Adviser from the Hillingdon Virtual School.

York Carers Centre and York St John University working together

York Carers Centre – a Network Partner of Carers Trust – supports young carers, young adult carers and adult carers.

In 2012, the Young Adult Carer Worker and the Employment, Education and Training Officer at York Carers Centre contacted local colleges and universities to strengthen partnership working. This was triggered by young adult carers disclosing some of the issues they were having at university. Examples included:

- One young adult carer missing much of her first year at university due to travelling home every week to care for her mother. The young adult carer went to her academic tutor for support and advice and to ask if she could re-sit the first year. The tutor encouraged her to drop out of university because it was unrealistic for her to complete a degree and care for her mum. York Carers Centre intervened by contacting the tutor to explain about her caring role, the support she needed and advocated for the young adult carer. The university then agreed to let the young adult carer re-sit her first year.
- Two young adult carers dropping out of university because of significant caring roles and not feeling supported by their university.

As part of the partnership work, York Carers Centre has a stall at York St John's Fresher's Fair. The aim is to raise awareness of **unpaid** carers, inform students that there is a local support service for them if needed and to recruit student volunteers to work with young carers at the project. Several volunteers have been recruited and five young adult carers came forward to disclose that they were a carer and were registered straight away with York Carers Centre. One young adult carer said she never would have known about the service if they had not been at Fresher's Fair.

York Carers Centre has also run information stalls at York St John's University throughout the year to coincide with Carers Week and Carers Rights Day and attended university fairs that were already taking place in Health and Wellbeing Week. An unexpected result of this was that several members of staff from the university also came forward and disclosed they were carers and registered themselves to get support from the service.

Widening participation through involvement at events and festivals

Involvement at events and festivals by your university can include supporting an existing event hosted by a third party, or offering to host an event for an external body, such as a charity. The university can engage in valuable outreach by running sessions and workshops designed to promote higher education opportunities.

The National Young Carers Festival

For the past two years, staff and student carers from The University of Winchester, the University of Oxford and the University of Southampton have supported the National Young Carers Festival at YMCA Fairthorne Manor. The universities have provided activities including a Design-a-Student competition, short story writing, and the Star Student game, and have given information about higher education progression opportunities. Working closely with The Children's Society, this activity has provided the opportunity to engage with a wide range of young carers aged from six years upwards and introduce them to the concept of higher education in a relaxed setting.

Raising Awareness of Young Carers event

The University of Winchester works closely with Hampshire County Council, The Children's Society, Carers Trust and Hampshire Young Carers Alliance. In January 2014, in partnership with these agencies, and led by Hampshire County Council, the university hosted a conference called Raising Awareness of Young Carers. This was attended by 40 staff from colleges, schools and young carers projects. It included a workshop delivered by the university, which was contributed to by two young adult carer undergraduates from the university.

"From the university's perspective the event was well worthwhile. It cemented our relationships with partners and gave our students an opportunity to share their experiences (which also built their confidence). Most importantly, it encouraged local colleges to identify and support young adult carers, especially when applying to university."

Dr Terri Sandison, Director of Lifelong Learning and Staff Development,
The University of Winchester.



Young Adult Carers Time to be Heard event

In June 2014, Carers Trust and The University of Nottingham brought together 125 young adult carers from across the UK, giving them the chance to experience higher education and also to have their voices heard by decision makers and opinion formers. The event also provided information on further education and dispelled myths about access to college and university. 44 support workers, 33 Student Ambassadors and 33 decision makers also attended the event.

The sessions, run by The University of Nottingham's lecturers, and the wide variety of opportunities that Carers Trust gave young adult carers to get their voices heard received excellent feedback. 95% of young adult carers said they had become aware of new opportunities and new useful information that could help them. 92% said they felt their voice had been heard and they had raised aspirations about their future.

The flyer for this event can be viewed at http://www.e-activist.com/ea-campaign/action.retrievefile.do?ea_fileid=40942 and the Event Report can be accessed at <https://professionals.carers.org/nottingham>.

University widening participation events and programmes targeting young carers and young adult carers

In addition to participating in or hosting events and festivals for young carers and young adult carers, universities can also run their own events such as residential programmes and activity days to widen their outreach.

The University of Oxford's Compass: Young Carers Programme

In 2009, the University of Oxford began a Compass Programme that targets students in Years 10 and 11 who have caring responsibilities at home. The programme aims to raise educational aspiration and attainment through a range of engaging activities that enable participants to build their confidence, recognise their skills and increase their familiarity with the culture of higher education.

In 2010–11, Oxfordshire County Council was working with 73 recorded young carers, nine of whom were Compass participants. Of these participants, more than 50% attained five GCSEs at grades A*–C, compared to 37% of non-Compass participants achieving the same success.

For more information on the Compass Programme see <http://static.carers.org/files/widening-participation-in-higher-education-for-young-carers-6656.pdf> and www.ox.ac.uk/local-community/outreach-and-education/widening-participation/our-wp-programmes/compass-young-carers-programme.

Charlie is studying at the University of Oxford. He cares for his brother. Due to his caring role, Charlie became part of the University of Oxford's Compass programme when he was in secondary school. The programme benefitted Charlie greatly and opened his eyes to the possibilities available to him:

“I took part in the Compass programme in year 11. Before Compass I knew that I wanted to stay at school for my A-levels, but I had never considered applying to Oxford at all. I thought that I probably would go to uni, but I wasn't even sure if that was what I wanted or could do, and I definitely had no idea about where I'd study. The Compass programme was great for getting me to think about the options available to me that I had not even considered, not just Oxford University, but also other career paths, such as apprenticeships. I also think the whole experience of visiting Oxford, seeing some of the colleges, and meeting current students, was also important as it made it seem much more real to me, that this was something that students chose to do, and so there was no reason why I couldn't also try to do the same.”

The programme also gave Charlie some practical skills that helped him when the time came to apply to university:

“At this point [in year 11], actually applying to Oxford or any other university was still some time away in the future, so I hadn't looked into the whole application process. However, Compass did make me aware that I'd have to write a personal statement wherever I applied and helped me understand how to write one, and we also did some work on interview practice. Both of these sessions really benefited me when it came to applying, as prior to Compass, I'd had no experience of either.”

Young Carer activity days at York St John University

York St John University held two Young Carer activity days at its campus during the summer of 2014 – one was for young carers aged 8–13 and the other was for young adult carers aged 14–19. The young people took part in a range of aspiration raising activities, had a tour of the campus and took part in subject specific taster sessions. The university plans to run more of these events in the future and in the long term is thinking about a young carer specific residential.

Young carers are included in the university's target groups for widening participation work and its annual Summer School. The university currently attends and runs widening participation sessions at targeted youth clubs for black, Asian and minority ethnic young people and looked after children and aims to increase this participation by attending some of the young carer youth clubs in the future.

York St John University, the University of York and the University of Hull have initiated a new partnership to work with young carers in a collaborative way. This includes the University of Hull running a three day residential for 50 young carers with half day visits from the University of York and York St John University.

The University of Winchester Young Carers Residential

For the past three years, The University of Winchester has run a two night/ three day residential for young carers. This started as a joint initiative with Winchester Young Carers Project when the charity and the university began to work closely together, but has now extended to all young carers projects across Hampshire. 32 young carers aged 14 and over attended the residential in 2014, which included a visit to the University for the Creative Arts in Farnham. In 2013, young carers from the University of Oxford Compass programme joined the residential for one day.

The annual programmes are impartial and each year contain a mix of fun activities, confidence-building, university taster sessions and information about higher education. In 2014, a wide range of staff from Professional Services departments in the University attended a session on the final day for 'speed networking' so that participants could learn about their different career pathways and current roles.

See Appendix 3 for a schedule of the 2014 Young Carers Residential.

Collaboration between universities

Universities from across the country form collaborative partnerships to extend the reach of their widening participation programmes. The main focus of these is on schools and colleges, but most also have sub-groups or associated networks to support specific groups such as looked after children or mature learners. By including young and young adult carers in the scope of these collaborative partnerships more young and young adult carers can be reached in widening participation activities.

Hampshire universities group supporting vulnerable children and young people

The Hampshire Universities Widening Participation Group (HUWPG) (University of Portsmouth, University of Southampton, Southampton Solent University and The University of Winchester) has a Vulnerable Children and Young People sub-group. The definition of the target group is 'children living in care, young carers, care leavers (up to age 25) and children of refugees and asylum seekers'. The aims of the group are:

- a) To pool information and share best practice in promoting higher education options to vulnerable children and young people, their families and practitioners working with them.
- b) To work in partnership to facilitate higher education progression for vulnerable children and young people.

with the following objectives:

- a) To develop an effective network for staff across HUWPG partners.
- b) To develop an effective network with relevant external bodies.
- c) To promote a wider understanding of the support and opportunities in higher education available to vulnerable children and young people.
- d) To collaborate and contribute to events targeted at vulnerable children and young people, their families or practitioners who work with them.

Through regular meetings, the group identifies a number of activities each year to which they can contribute and which involve one of the target groups, usually working with external partners such as local authorities or charities.

Engaging current university students in widening participation activity

Engaging student carers in widening participation activities through ambassador/mentor work benefits the young carers and young adult carers who gain support from someone who personally understands the challenges that they face. Student carers also benefit from having the opportunity to work with other students with caring responsibilities and develop new skills to add to their CVs.



The University of Winchester's Higher Education Ambassadors

The University of Winchester employs students as Higher Education Ambassadors to work with the Widening Participation Team, delivering widening participation activities to targeted young people (including young carers). In choosing which students to employ, the

university specifically seeks applications from students with backgrounds which are under-represented in higher education. In 2014, seven Ambassadors had been young carers. This has a number of benefits for the university and for the students themselves:

- Students who have been young carers provide expert input into widening participation with young carers at schools, sharing the experiences they had at school/college and explaining what it is like to be at university. They understand the challenges and pressures involved and can also help young carers to understand how their caring experience can be beneficial in building skills of independent living, time management and self-discipline – exactly those that are required of good undergraduates.
- Students gain a great deal from being Ambassadors:
 - They develop new skills and knowledge to add to their CVs.
 - They may discover a possible new career direction through their experience of working with disadvantaged young people (not just young carers).
 - They have another stream of income from a role that can fit flexibly around their timetables.

Students working as Higher Education Ambassadors at The University of Winchester have worked with the Widening Participation Team by attending club nights at local young carers projects. Sometimes this is to give general information about higher education through fun activities such as quizzes and games, or just to have a discussion about pathways to university. At other times they have challenged young carers groups to a budgeting and cooking challenge – the aim being partly to share information about living independently at university and partly to build the self-esteem and confidence of young carers by demonstrating to them how skilled they already are due to their caring roles. During activities such as these there are many opportunities for informal chats in a relaxed non-institutional setting, allowing for an open discussion about concerns and questions. Club night visits are also an opportunity to highlight forthcoming events at the university, such as the annual young carers residential and taster days.

For more information on the Higher Education Ambassadors see www.winchester.ac.uk/aboutus/communityengagement/wideningparticipation/hea/Pages/Higher-Education-Ambassadors-hea.aspx.



“A bonus of being a young adult carer is that it has helped me get work as an Ambassador at the university. This has helped me tremendously with confidence and developing personal skills like public speaking. Also, through the job I have met other young adult carers in the university who I have now become good friends with. The most positive thing I have gained at university is the confidence in being myself. The opportunities that have become available to me are endless which has helped develop my skills and even expand my CV.”

Higher Education Ambassador



The University of the West of England Carers Mentoring Scheme

The University of the West of England has partnered up with The Carers Support Centre (Bristol and South Gloucestershire) and local schools to deliver a mentoring scheme to young carers from primary to secondary school age. The scheme, funded by the university, began in 2010 and has the aim of raising young carers' awareness of the higher education opportunities available to them and their aspirations, and also providing practical support to improve their attainment.

In relation to the young carers, the scheme has noticed that: “The mentoring project has actively engaged with a number of young carers who were at considerable risk of not fulfilling their educational potential and it is proving successful in raising the awareness and the aspirations of young carers to engage and progress in their education. It has also made a positive impact on how young carers view themselves as learners – with the potential to go on to further and higher education.”

The scheme has also noticed positive outcomes for the mentors themselves: “For some, it has enabled recognition of themselves as young carers. The project has also helped mentors develop their own skills, helped them in their own thinking about future career options, reinforced their feelings of belonging at university and helped to reduce feelings of isolation.”

For more information on this mentoring scheme, including hints and tips on how to start a mentoring scheme for young carers, see <http://static.carers.org/files/uni-of-west-england-proof2-6731.pdf>

Recommendations

- Run targeted widening participation events for young carers such as open days or residential events.
- Encourage schools to identify young carers to attend university widening participation events alongside other targeted widening participation groups.
- Develop information promoting support for young adult carers at your university.
- Develop partnership work between your university and a local young carers or young adult carers service.
- Identify young adult carers through the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT).
- Monitor the number of students entering the university with caring responsibilities through widening participation and/or marketing activities.

Further suggestions

- Establish a targeted young carers skills training programme to encourage, empower and raise the education and career aspirations of young carers as well as giving them related skills.
- Establish a programme where current students act as student carer ambassadors/mentors to reach out to schools, colleges and local young or young adult carers services.
- Facilitate access for young adult carers services to your university facilities, such as sporting facilities.
- Run targeted widening participation events for mature student carers, perhaps by working through local services for carers.

Chapter 4:

Supporting young adult carers through the applications and admissions process

This chapter will:

- Encourage universities to implement provisions to identify young adult carers during the applications and admissions process.
- Outline how the use of compact schemes can facilitate access to university for young adult carers.
- Highlight how providing personal statement advice to young adult carers can encourage them to disclose their caring responsibilities.
- Highlight why flexible admissions schemes may be important for young adult carers.

Identifying young adult carers in the applications and admissions process

Identifying young adult carers can be difficult. Research shows that many choose not to disclose that they are a young adult carer because they believe that there is “no point”, “no one asked”, they did not know “who to tell” or they “wished to keep it private” (Sempik, J and Becker, S, 2014a). By formally identifying young adult carers during the applications and admissions process, students are more likely to disclose that they have caring responsibilities and appropriate support can be provided from the start of a young adult carers’ university experience. There are also other mechanisms that can be used to obtain disclosure, such as encouraging young adult carers to disclose this responsibility in their personal statement and by including young adult carers in your university’s compact scheme.

More importantly, support services should be clearly visible and promoted so that young adult carers do not feel that there is no point in informing staff. If appropriate support does not follow after a student discloses their caring responsibilities then there is little point in them disclosing in the first place.



“It would also be useful to have ... a way in which to identify yourself as a carer during the application or enrolment process. This would mean that staff were already aware and that you did not have to explain numerous times.”

University student

The University of Oxford finds that it does not get many students disclosing their caring status, although the Widening Participation Team has noticed a change in the last couple of years, and is trying to combat this by speaking with teachers and prospective applicants and encouraging young adult carers to declare this information in their applications.

Fran is studying at The University of Winchester and has hopes of doing a Master's. She has been caring for her brother who has autism since she was 11. Fran wants universities to make sure that anyone who does care for someone is recognised from the start:

“In terms of increasing support at university, it is to make sure that anyone who does care for someone is recognised from the start so the university can make sure that they are not alone and know that if they want and need help there is always someone there!

Starting university, I did not disclose that I cared for someone on my university application as I thought it was not needed and to be honest did not want to use it as an excuse. However, since telling someone at university the support that I have gained has helped so much. I wished I had said something at the beginning and do recommend disclosing this on the application as you never know the help or opportunities you can get by doing this.”

Below are a number of case studies that set out the initiatives already in place at universities from across the country that aim to support student carers through the applications and admissions process.

Compact schemes

Many universities have compact schemes. These may be national or local, but all are focused on supporting students who have backgrounds which are under-represented in higher education to progress to university. Some are integrated with programmes designed to increase the chances of a student reaching the required entry threshold, such as residential programmes or mentoring, and may involve completion of set work.

The University of Winchester's compact scheme

The University of Winchester specifically includes in its compact scheme students 'who have caring responsibilities' or who have 'a disrupted pattern of education' or who have 'problems relating to health, disability or bereavement', among other criteria. These categories can be very helpful to young adult carers both in the admissions process and to flag up possible extra support needs while studying.

Other compact schemes link universities with local sixth form and college partners, or are targeted at students who live within a set geographical area – giving them special consideration at the application stage so that they can progress to higher education within their home region. The more local schemes may be particularly appropriate for young adult carers who choose to study locally so they stand a greater chance of combining their caring roles with study at a university. Typically, such schemes may offer a guaranteed interview or, if appropriate, an offer which is at the lower end of the usual entry requirements for a course. And if the student’s circumstances are explained to the university, they may also be offered guaranteed housing where appropriate.

Personal statement advice

As a result of taking on caring responsibilities, young adult carers will often develop many life skills that will be highly valued by universities and employers such as time-management and organisation skills, self-discipline and resilience. However, young adult carers applying for university often do not realise they have these skills, are not aware of how they would be valued by universities or are hesitant to share that they are carers at all.

Universities however, can explicitly encourage students to disclose that they have caring responsibilities in their application or admission forms and in their personal statement. This could be communicated through widening participation activities, relevant literature and online resources, or through relevant staff communicating this to prospective students.



“Carers come with skills pre-built within us such as high levels of maturity and empathy.”

University graduate

Carers Trust’s personal statement advice for young adult carers

Carers Trust has developed personal statement advice, including a short film for young adult carers. See the Matter website <https://matter.carers.org/post/873>. Your university could help by guiding future students to this link in your prospectus or other university resources.

Flexibility with entry requirements for young adult carers

Carers Trust encourages universities to have flexible entry arrangements in place for young adult carers to recognise that having caring responsibilities can affect achievement, through missed time at school, or through other extenuating circumstances that are outside the young adult carer’s control. Research by The Children’s Society found one in 12 young carers is caring for more than 15 hours per week and around one in 20 misses school because of their caring

responsibilities (The Children's Society, 2013). It also found that young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers; that is the difference between nine Bs and nine Cs.

Flexible admissions at The University of Nottingham

The University of Nottingham uses exam grades to prioritise applicants for its courses but other factors are considered as well. The university recognises that some educational and personal circumstances affect achievement, including:

- Being responsible for the long-term care of a sick or disabled family member.
- Having day-to-day family or work responsibilities.

If an applicant discloses these circumstances, the university considers them when assessing their academic potential. What this means for the applicant depends on which course they have applied for because different courses have different requirements and some courses may make a lower offer based on this information. The fact file for each course in the university's online prospectus confirms whether a course varies its offer.

See www.nottingham.ac.uk/ugstudy/applying/ourpolicies.aspx for further information.

Recommendations

- Identify young adult carers during the applications and admissions process.
- Offer flexibility with entry requirements for young adult carers.
- Include young adult carers in your university's compact scheme (to include for example, residential events, learning assignments and inductions prior to the start of the course).
- Provide information and advice for applicants who are carers at open days and in your university prospectus and website.

Further suggestions

- Provide personal statement advice for young adult carers in your university's prospectus and ensure applications and admissions staff are fully trained to deal with any queries.
- Use the process outlined in the flowchart in Chapter 2 to assist with the identification of young adult carers during the applications and admissions process.
- Provide details of the relevant people for young adult carers to contact at your university and in your university's prospectus.

Chapter 5:

Providing student support to young adult carers

This chapter will:

- Outline why it is important to facilitate the identification of young adult carers and provide examples of how universities are doing this.
- Provide examples of existing student support currently offered in universities.
- Highlight the importance of training for relevant staff on carers' issues and the specific needs of students who are young adult carers.

Ensuring the effective support of young adult carers at university not only requires having multiple arrangements in place for the students themselves, but also that relevant staff are aware of and understand the issues related to being a student and a carer.

In this chapter there are a number of case studies that set out the personal experiences of student carers as well as initiatives already in place at universities from across the country that aim to support student carers while they are at university. Also included are ideas and suggestions for providing student carers with the support that they need.

The whole family approach

A whole family approach to supporting young adult carers is commonly accepted as vital for reducing caring responsibilities. By first assessing the support needs of the person needing care and providing the support to meet these needs, this should significantly help to reduce inappropriate caring roles.



“Student Services at Winchester have been amazing! Since being recognised as a young adult carer, I have had support with amending deadlines when needed. I also have access to bursaries, counselling and other welfare support that they offer, if I need it”.

University student

Where students have moved away to university, this may have led to the person in need of care being left without the support they need. Therefore, directing and supporting student carers to where they can begin to seek the support that is needed for their families has the potential to significantly change the situation for that student. Students and their families can approach either their local authority directly, or a local carers or young adult carers service, for support.

See A model for working with student carers in Chapter 2.

Identifying young adult carers

There are many carers of all ages who have never identified themselves as a carer to a support service or a professional. Many choose not to share their personal situation perhaps through fear of intervention from services, or because of cultural reasons, or simply because they have not seen the benefit of identifying themselves as a carer. For others, caring has simply been a lifestyle and they have not even recognised themselves as a carer.

Student carers who remain unidentified at university will not benefit from the recognition and support that is available to them and their families. Supporting a carer can be vital in helping them to maintain their own health and wellbeing and successfully continue and finish their university course. It is therefore important that universities create opportunities that will facilitate students self-identifying as carers, so they can access the support that is available both in and outside the university.



Named contact within Student Services at Liverpool John Moores University

A key step in developing a holistic package of support for Young Adult Carers is the identification of a member of staff within Student Services to act as a dedicated point of contact for students with caring responsibilities both prior to and throughout a student's time at university. Liverpool John Moores University has developed the role of Student Support Coordinator (Vulnerable Groups) within its Student Advice and Wellbeing Service to provide an expert level of information, advice and guidance around issues specific to young adult carers studying in higher education. The Student Support Coordinator works with individual students to develop a personalised package of support which may include:

- Student funding advice (including access to additional sources of funding such as bursaries, scholarships and hardship funds).
- Identification of study skills needs.
- Access to appropriate student accommodation.
- A mentor/buddy, as required.
- Signposting to other university services (including Career Advice and the Student Union).

In addition, the Student Support Coordinator acts as a liaison between the student and their home/school/faculty to ensure effective communication of a student's needs and how these may impact on their studies. Throughout the student's time at the university, their package of support will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the demands of their course and their caring responsibilities.

Self-identification and needs assessment – Liverpool John Moores University partnership with Barnardo's

Support services for young adult carers in Liverpool are coordinated by Barnardo's local Action with Young Carers Project. Barnardo's has developed a network of local higher and further education institutions, including Liverpool John Moores University, which meets regularly to discuss issues relating to the progression and support of young adult carers in Liverpool.

Through Barnardo's self-assessment and support processes, young adult carers are identified and sign-posted to the relevant support services at their college or university. The network also facilitates reverse-referral of students with caring responsibilities who have yet to access support via Barnardo's. Contact details for Barnardo's are available online and copies of its publicity materials are widely available around the university's campus.

The University of Salford's policy for identifying and supporting students with caring responsibilities

At the University of Salford, students with caring responsibilities can register themselves as a carer, giving them access to the support available to them both within the university and through external agencies.

There is a designated Student Life Carer Coordinator who will set up an individual Carer Support Plan with the student carer. The Carer Support Plan provides leeway in relation to assignment deadlines, tutor contact and attendance.

The policy also provides guidance on other forms of student support, such as the procedures to be followed in case of personal mitigating circumstances and interruption of studies. It also signposts the wide range of services available, such as counselling, disability, learner and financial support. In addition, there is a dedicated web page for student carers (www.advice.salford.ac.uk/page/carers).

Fresher's and Wellbeing Weeks

Starting at university can be a daunting time for any student, but for those students with caring responsibilities, attending activities during Fresher's Week may prove particularly difficult. Working with your university's Student Union to facilitate a programme of events (both social and pastoral) that are accessible to students with caring responsibilities can be important for ensuring a smooth transition to university life for a student carer.

Lisa is studying at university. She has been caring for her brother since she was eight years old. Deciding to study at a university away from home was a difficult decision for Lisa because of her caring responsibilities, but a stall at her Fresher's Fair made everything a bit easier:

"After moving in to my halls at university, there was so much going on that I managed the first few weeks fairly easily, but a few weeks in, when everything had quietened down things started to get more difficult. Initially, it was feeling guilty that I was not at home and if anything happened while I was away I couldn't be there to help. On top of this I had also lost my support network of my family, local carers centre and friends who understood. However, during Fresher's Fair I had seen a stall for the local carers centre and had given them my details. They got in touch just as I was starting to find things difficult and were a great support in helping me get through that time."

Facilitating peer support

Coffee mornings and drop-in sessions are an excellent way of enabling new students to meet with other students to develop informal peer support networks and share experiences.

Initiating wider support

National events such as World Mental Health Day, along with individual university campaigns such as National Student Money Week and Student Wellbeing Week and thematic events also provide opportunities to engage students with internal student support services and external agencies such as local carers services.

Information for student carers

Induction information

Providing information about the support available for student carers is vital in encouraging students to self-identify and seek support. This may be through literature within your university's induction information (both at university and programme level) by including signposting to dedicated advice and guidance services for students with caring responsibilities, as well as to general student support services. During induction week, dedicated events for students to meet with Student Services staff for advice about students' needs such as funding, accommodation and academic advice can also help to support a smooth transition to university.

Inclusion of young adult carers during induction talks at The University of Winchester

During The University of Winchester's Welcome Week, the Student Services team gives a presentation to new students, which includes encouragement for those from under-represented groups to apply to be Higher Education Ambassadors. A slide lists those backgrounds from which the University is keen to recruit. This includes young carers.

Student Services also offers to meet with students to find out whether they would like any specific support, or whether they would like to set up a peer support group with other students from similar backgrounds.

An information portal

Dedicated web resources containing relevant information for students with caring responsibilities are useful in ensuring both students and staff have clear and consistent information about the types of support available specifically for young adult carers. Typical information that might be included on a university's Student Services web page is:

- The university's commitment to student carers and links to any relevant institutional policies.
- Information on the support available at the university – both for applicants and current students with caring responsibilities.
- Directing students to sources of information, advice and guidance at the university and externally.
- Contact details of the dedicated member of staff with responsibility for students with caring responsibilities.
- Links to the Students Union and related student groups.
- Links to local support services, including a local carers service or young adult carers service.
- Video resources that raise awareness about young adult carers and the support available.

The De Montfort University's web resources for young adult carers

The De Montfort University Leicester has a dedicated web page for student carers that encompasses many of these suggestions, see www.dmu.ac.uk/dmu-students/the-student-gateway/adjusting-to-student-life/student-carers.aspx.



Further online support and information for young adult carers

Carers Trust's online service for young adult carers – Matter

Matter is an online service for young adult carers aged 16–25 and was developed after extensive research into the specific needs of this age group around issues such as gaining independence, leaving home, finding employment and opportunities for higher education. The focus on quick and easy access to the mobile/tablet friendly site enables young adults to post photos, update statuses, ask for help and share their thoughts and comments from wherever they are.

Matter also holds a wealth of information for young adult carers, including information specifically tailored to those thinking of attending university, such as tips on applying to university and personal statement advice (<https://matter.carers.org/users/carers-trust-tips>). A University Q&A can be accessed on the site at <https://matter.carers.org/post/749>.

All universities are encouraged to share the Matter website with prospective and current students who are young adult carers, as this can provide an extra avenue of support, particularly if there is not a local carers service in close proximity to your university, see <https://matter.carers.org/>.

The University of Salford's Carers Forum

A consultation by the university with student carers identified a need for a web space where carers could provide support for other carers. Therefore, the university created the Carers Forum; an online forum where carers at the university can share their experiences and support each other, see <http://wecare.usonline.org.uk/>.



“At the university I attended, I was very lucky there was a box I could tick on the bursary application that I was a carer, and that helped me get more money.”

University graduate

Applications for institutional hardship funds provide an excellent opportunity to identify current students with caring responsibilities. A tick box to disclose carer status on hardship fund application forms enables institutions to identify appropriate additional financial support such as specific scholarships, bursaries and discretionary hardship funds.

Financial support for student carers

The rules relating to student eligibility for benefits are complex and, in real terms, few full-time students will be able to claim additional benefits relating to their caring role. It would be beneficial if the relevant staff at your university received appropriate training on the interaction between statutory student funding and the benefits system for student carers and were able to carry out an initial assessment of a student's eligibility for funding, or signpost students to a local carers service or Citizens Advice Bureau for support with this.



“I have struggled with budgeting as I have the extra cost of transport back home and have not been eligible for any university funds.”

University student

The University of Sheffield's bursary for young adult carers

The University of Sheffield offers a bursary scheme for students with five award areas, one of which targets young adult carers. The bursary offers £4,500 per year to students 'who care for an ill or disabled family member' regardless of their household income and where they live.

For more information on this bursary see <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/finance/fees/2015/sheffield-bursary>

The University of Wales, Trinity Saint David – Young Carer Bursary

The university has a bursary of up to £1,000 for students 'registered as young carers for family members' in the UK and EU.

For more information on this bursary see www.uwtsd.ac.uk/bursaries/.

Adam, a student carer, thinks that more can be done to ensure that young adult carers get the extra financial assistance that they need to cover their extra costs, such as additional travel:

“My university does a financial check on each student, but this doesn’t take into account students that are carers despite them offering financial help to these people. Perhaps I could have been given more assistance had this check included carers as I had no knowledge they were offered help until I searched for it myself this year (my third year).”

But with the help of a local carers centre, Adam will hopefully receive the financial help that he needs from his university in his final year:

“I am hopeful that I will receive financial help from my university this year. I have not looked into it before when I may well have been eligible, but this should help with transport costs, etc. I am only in the early stage of being registered with my local carers centre but so far they have been able to provide help with me gaining financial assistance from my university.”

The University of Winchester’s postgraduate scholarship

The University of Winchester has a Postgraduate Access Scholarship Scheme (PASS) with the strategic aim of reaching out to groups not traditionally represented in higher education.

The scholarship provides a 20% discount on tuition fees for a number of groups including a ‘carer for a family member with long-term ill-health or disability’.

Young adult carers included in extenuating circumstances provisions

Universities are generally responsive to students who, for genuine reasons, cannot meet their study commitments, such as meeting deadlines and attending examinations and lectures. All universities will have policies setting out how a student should apply for their special circumstances to be taken into account. Students with caring responsibilities will most commonly be asked to see an adviser in Student Services, or to discuss their circumstances with a personal tutor. It is important that young adult carers recognise that their caring responsibilities could count as extenuating circumstances so that they get the support that they need. Tutors and other relevant staff should have a good understanding of the impact of being a carer on studying, for example unexpected emergencies could impact on deadlines and attendance.



Extenuating circumstances at The University of Winchester

The University of Winchester recognises that sometimes, something happens that is beyond the ordinary pressures of life and seeks to offer the opportunity for students to achieve what would be considered their normal standard of academic work. Extenuating circumstances are defined as: 'Circumstances, normally exceptional and outside the control of the student, which prevent him/her from performing in assessment at the level expected or required of them.'

The policy lists examples of valid extenuating circumstances and these include 'significant adverse personal/family/work circumstances'. Students need to complete a standard form, usually with the support of Student Services, which will enable their situation to be taken into account. If deemed necessary, deadlines may be extended or other supportive measures put in place, with lecturers informed of the circumstances (with the student's consent).

For students who have placements, such as those taking teacher training, it can be helpful for universities to support student carers by arranging placements as close as possible to their home, thus reducing their travel time, which may be significant because of their responsibilities at home.

Training embedded for relevant staff on carers' issues and communication between staff

Where relevant staff are aware of and understand the issues experienced by student carers, they can actively seek to identify these students and facilitate support for them. It is important for the right staff to be aware of what support young adult carers can access, both in and outside the university and how they can access it.

Annual briefings on young adult carers' issues at the University of Oxford

The Widening Participation Team at the University of Oxford has an annual briefing with the Undergraduate Admissions Offices (including those in the Admissions Information centre) to discuss its widening participation work, which includes specific information on young adult carers, and the questions they may ask, or support they may require, when applying to the University of Oxford. This is attended by the majority of the staff in Undergraduate Admissions, and some departmental and college staff. The Admissions Team often refers calls to the Widening Participation Team regarding young adult carers' issues if they are unsure of how to answer them.

The Student Ambassadors and volunteers that work with the University are also briefed on working with and supporting specific vulnerable groups (including young adult carers), and part of this training includes supporting any peers in the student body who may disclose information on being a carer to them, including pointing them towards support within their college/the wider university.

Guidance for personal tutors who work with students who are young adult carers

Personal tutors should be aware that having caring responsibilities at home is a significant issue outside the teaching and learning environment that may well have an impact on a student's ability to progress with and complete their studies.

Where personal tutors work closely and on a one-to-one basis with students who have caring responsibilities and where they understand their specific circumstances and needs, they will be able to work with them more flexibly and support students to do well academically. Students may not want, or feel able, to disclose their caring roles in personal tutoring sessions, so will need the space and opportunities to do so in confidence.



“In terms of increasing support at university ... making sure the lecturers have a good understanding of a young adult carer so that if something goes wrong then the individual does not have to explain why they may have missed a lecture etc.”

University student

Some student carers may not require any additional support, or they may not want their caring responsibilities to have an impact on their studies or on their relationships and communications with other students and staff. Others may need specific support in helping to manage and balance their studies with their caring responsibilities. While it is not the role of personal tutors to advise student carers on care management or health and social care issues (outside the teaching and learning environment), personal tutors can offer students the necessary and appropriate support with respect to managing their studies while at university.

Recommendations from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (Aylward, N, 2009) propose that, in their access to and participation in learning, young adult carers require flexible provision, sensitive arrangements, and holistic and effective support from a range of different sources.

For personal tutors who work on a one-to-one basis with students who are carers, they should therefore aim to:

- Recognise that because of their caring responsibilities young adult carers may not always be able to attend lectures, seminars or workshops regularly or on time – a more flexible approach is required that does not penalise such students for non-attendance or lateness.
- Recognise that young adult carers may need additional support with their studies, for example extended coursework deadlines or extra time in examinations. A more flexible approach will be needed that acknowledges that young adult carers have additional responsibilities which may affect their ability to meet deadlines and other academic commitments.
- Recognise that young adult carers may need extra time in personal tutoring sessions to discuss their needs in confidence with someone they can trust.
- Have the necessary training and understanding about the impact of caring on children and young people's lives with respect to their transitions into higher education.
- Be aware that students may or may not disclose their caring responsibilities but they need the space and opportunities to do so in confidence.
- Understand that when students do disclose caring responsibilities they may still wish this information to be treated in confidence.
- Ask students who have disclosed their caring responsibilities whether they are happy for this information to be shared with other relevant staff or organisations where necessary.
- Manage such disclosures sensitively.
- Ask students about the kind of support they require in order to manage their studies alongside their caring responsibilities.

- Put student carers in touch with individuals, organisations or bodies within and outside the university where necessary who will be able to offer support – within the university these may include Student Support, counselling and disability services, widening participation services and the Student Union. They may also include organisations outside the university such as local or national young adult carers services or youth services.

Lisa, a student carer at university, has had a mixed experience when it comes to support from her university and she asks that all universities set up specific support services for student carers and ways of identifying them during enrolment:

“I have had both good and bad experiences with university staff. When I originally told my academic tutor I was a carer she said that she didn’t think there was much point me being at university as I was not going to be able to manage; she was also very unhelpful the first time I needed an extension. I was told that being a carer did not count as mitigating circumstances and I was just the same as a student with children. Initially, I was really upset and thought I may have to leave the course, however I eventually went to the Student Union who supported me in getting the extension I needed by speaking to my head of programme. Since then I don’t go to my academic tutor, I go directly to the head of programme who is always really helpful and understanding.

I am glad that I have a member of staff who understands and that I can speak to when I have problems, however it would have been a lot easier if all staff had a good knowledge of carers. It would also be useful to have specific support services for carers within the university and also a way in which to identify yourself as a carer during the application or enrolment process. This would mean that staff were already aware and that you did not have to explain numerous times.”

Recommendations

- Provide training for relevant staff on carers’ issues and the specific needs of students who are carers.
- Ensure personal tutors are aware of carers and what types of support and flexible approaches can be offered.
- Provide information and advice on financial matters for young adult carers.
- Publicise and promote support for student carers in a variety of ways, including through the university intranet, website, internal mailings, prospectus and other literature (student handbook), the Student Union and Student Services.

- Provide ongoing opportunities for identifying student carers and encouraging self-identification, including through the personal tutoring system.
- Work with your Student Union to protect the welfare of student carers.
- Ensure that when equality impact assessments/analysis are carried out that indirect discrimination to student carers is considered.



“I am a carer with a degree. That means that I am seen as a ‘success story’. It shouldn’t be that way. Firstly, because everyone has the right to the education that they want. Secondly, because my time at school and university was a constant struggle – it is only looking back that I would describe it as successful.”

University graduate

Further suggestions

- Support the transition of a young adult carer from college/sixth form to university, for example by publishing and promoting support for young adult carers during Fresher’s Week/Wellbeing weeks.
- Implement a student mentors/student representatives scheme for new students who are carers.
- Include student carer issues within your university’s equality and diversity training and development for relevant staff.
- Establish a dedicated bursary for student carers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Self-assessment checklist for supporting student carers

Recommendation/Suggestion	Implemented (✓)
1. Establishing foundations for supporting student carers	
Develop and promote a commitment for young adult carers	
Establish a policy for young adult carers or integrate the commitments to young adult carers into existing policies	
Introduce a university lead/champion and team for young adult carers with the role of overseeing the implementation of policy for carers	
Provide awareness training on young adult carers for all relevant members of staff, to include personal tutors, student support, student widening participation and recruitment/admissions staff	
Include young adult carers in your Access Agreement and widening participation	
Work with local authorities to enable them to fulfil their legal duties to young adult carers under the Care Act 2014	
Incorporate your university's support for carers into your local authority's strategy for carers and young carers	
2. Reaching young carers through widening participation	
Run targeted widening participation events for young carers such as open days or residential events	
Encourage schools to identify young carers to attend university widening participation events alongside other targeted widening participation groups	
Develop information promoting support for young adult carers at your university	
Develop partnership work between your university and a local young carers or young adult carers service	
Identify young adult carers through the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT)	
Monitor the number of students entering the university with caring responsibilities through widening participation and/or marketing activities	
Further suggestions	
Establish a targeted young carers skills training programme to encourage, empower and raise the education and career aspirations of young carers as well as giving them related skills	

Recommendation/Suggestion	Implemented (✓)
Establish a programme where current students act as student carer ambassadors/mentors to reach out to schools, colleges and local young or young adult carers services	
Facilitate access for young/young adult carers services to your university facilities, such as sporting facilities	
Run targeted widening participation events for mature student carers, perhaps by working through local services for carers	
3: Supporting young adult carers through the applications and admissions process	
Identify young adult carers during the applications and admissions process	
Offer flexibility with entry requirements for young adult carers	
Include young adult carers in your university's compact scheme (to include for example, residential events, learning assignments, inductions prior to start of course)	
Provide information and advice for applicants who are carers at open days and in your university prospectus and website	
Further suggestions	
Provide personal statement advice for young adult carers in your university's prospectus and ensure applications and admissions staff are fully trained to deal with any queries	
Use the process outlined in the flowchart in Chapter 2 to assist with the identification of young adult carers during the applications and admissions process	
Provide details of the relevant people for young adult carers to contact at your university and in your university's prospectus	
4. Providing student support to young adult carers	
Provide training for relevant staff on carers' issues and the specific needs of students who are carers	
Ensure personal tutors are aware of carers and what type of support and flexible approaches can be offered	
Provide information and advice on financial matters for young adult carers	
Publicise and promote support for student carers in a variety of ways, including through the university intranet, website, internal mailings, prospectus and other literature (student handbook), the Student Union and Student Services	
Provide ongoing opportunities for identifying student carers and encouraging self-identification, including through the personal tutoring system	
Work with your Student Union to protect the welfare of student carers	

Recommendation/Suggestion	Implemented (✓)
Ensure that when equality impact assessments/analysis are carried out that indirect discrimination to student carers is considered	
Further suggestions	
Support the transition of a young adult carer from college/sixth form to university, for example by publishing and promoting support for young adult carers during Fresher's Week/Wellbeing Weeks	
Implement a student mentors/student representatives scheme for new students who are carers	
Include student carer issues within your university's equality and diversity training and development for relevant staff	
Establish a dedicated bursary for student carers	
5. Other	
Identify young adult carers throughout the entire student life cycle: widening participation, applications, admissions and student support	

Appendix 2: Useful resources

Carers Trust's online game Life in a Spin encourages people to think about being in the shoes of a young adult carer. Access the game online at <http://lifeinaspin.org/intro>.

NIACE'S Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning for Young Adult Carers is aimed at young adult carers in England. It's full of useful information about looking after your health and wellbeing, job hunting, housing, health services, learning, working and volunteering, and money management. The book also has activities to help readers think positively, identify skills and skills gaps, and action plan. A one stop resource signposts to a range of websites and helplines for more information. See <http://shop.niace.org.uk/ruble-yac-2014.html>.

Carers Trust's Young Adult Carers infographic contains key statistics and information on young adult carers. See https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/young_adult_carers_who_are_they_final.pdf.

Carers Trust's Time to Be Heard film about young adult carers captures the views of young adult carers and provides more information on the Time to Be Heard campaign. See <http://www.carers.org/timetobeheard>.



Appendix 3: Schedule of the 2014 Young Carers Residential at The University of Winchester

Monday 7 April		Tuesday 8 April		Wednesday 8 April	
10.30	Arrivals	08.30	Breakfast	08.30	Breakfast
11.00	Introduction (outline of programme)	09.00	Stress balls	09.00	Move out of Halls
11.25	Icebreakers and orienteering	09.30	Stress and Anxiety workshop	09.30	Speed networking and Aspirations workshop Personal statements
12.45	LUNCH	10.45	Break – visit SU shop	11.30	Team challenge/ Rounders tournament (Evaluation)
1.30	Self Defence workshop	11.15	Travel to University for the Creative Arts	12.30	BUFFET LUNCH
3.30	Move into Halls	12.30	UCA Day Welcome, lunch and tour Creative Arts tasters	1.00	Depart
4.00	Get ready for evening activities				
4.15	Budgeting and Cooking Challenge	4.30	Travel back to UoW		
		6.00	Dinner		
		7.00	Decopatch		
10.00	Chill out and outline day 2	9.00	Film night		
11.00	Lights out	11.30	Lights out		



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