

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and
Education Committee
Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg |
Priorities for the Children, Young People and Education Committee

CYPE 64

Ymateb gan : Ymddiriedolaeth Gofalwyr Cymru

Response from : Carers Trust Wales

About Carers Trust Wales

Carers Trust Wales is part of Carers Trust, a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for the 370,000 people in Wales 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.

Our Mission is to identify, support and involve Wales' unpaid carers through the provision of action, help and advice.

Together with our locally-based network partners, we provide access to desperately-needed breaks, information and advice, education, training and employment opportunities – working with 20,000 carers a year in Wales. Our network partners benefit from the provision of grants, advice documents and reports to improve carers' services. We give carers and young carers opportunities to speak to someone and make their voices heard, offline via our carers' services and young carers' schemes, and via our online communities.

Our Strategic aims are

1. Championing carers – ensuring their voices heard and carers have a high profile across Wales including in the media, government
2. Delivering services for carers in Wales – researching and promoting solutions for carers across Wales
3. Building partnerships and delivering change – working meaningfully across sectors to reach more carers in all spheres of life
4. A strong Carers Trust Wales network – working closely with our network partners to increase sustainability and impact across Wales

Our Vision is a Caring Wales – where unpaid carers are recognised and able to get the support they need

The National Assembly for Wales' Children, Young People and Education Committee (the Committee) was established by the Assembly on 28 June 2016 with the remit '*to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising its expenditure, administration and policy, encompassing (but not restricted to): the education, health and well-being of the children and young people of Wales, including their social care*'.

Overview

1. Carers Trust Wales strongly believes that the challenges faced by young and young adult carers should be a key priority for the Children, Young People and Education Committee
2. A carer is anyone who cares, **unpaid**, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.
3. Wales has the highest proportion of carers in the UK. Carers in Wales are also, on average, caring for more hours a week than carers elsewhere in the UK.
4. Officially there are 29,000 carers under the age of 25 in Wales, however the actual figure is likely much higher.
5. Despite the census reporting that there are at least 11,500 young carers in Wales, only 782 are known to social services according to Welsh Government figures.
6. Young and young adult carers face significant challenges in accessing, achieving in and staying in education. Carers in school miss or cut short 48 days a year, and 1 in 4 have been bullied as a result of their caring role
7. Wales needs a consistent approach to identification of young and young adult carers in schools, work-based learning programmes, colleges, and universities, as well as flexible policies to support those carers.
8. Carers Trust Wales would welcome the opportunity to expand upon our points in this response with the Committee.

Question 1 – Within the remit set out above: what do you consider to be the priorities or issues that the Children, Young People and Education Committee should consider during the Fifth Assembly?

- 1.1. We strongly believe the challenges faced by young and young adult carers should be a key priority for the Children, Young People and Education Committee in the Fifth Assembly
- 1.2. A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.
- 1.3. Carers Trust Wales has an extensive programme of work in place supporting young and young adult carers, including:
 - Our Young Adult Carer Council which includes young adult carers from across Wales
 - Frequent events to improve access to university for carers, including residentials to give a taste of university life
 - Working with staff members at universities to improve policies and awareness of carers' issues
 - Ongoing work implementing our Young Carers in Schools Programme in Wales. In one year of the programme's implementation in England, 94% of participating schools had identified more young carers and 74% had noticed improved attendance. We are currently organising a Wales pilot.
 - Our [Time to be Heard Wales](#) research into the experiences of young adult carers
- 1.4. Wales is a uniquely caring country, according to the 2011 census we have the highest proportion of carers in the UK. The 2011 census also found that carers in Wales care for longer on average than carers anywhere else in the UK¹.
- 1.5. Carers contribute £8.1 billion worth of care in Wales every year, more than the entire Welsh NHS budget and the equivalent of £21,892 per carer every year².
- 1.6. According to the last census, there are 29,000 carers under the age of 25 in Wales, including 11,500 under the age of 18.

¹

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthcaresystem/articles/2011censusanalysisunpaidcareinenglandandwales2011andcomparisonwith2001/2013-02-15>

² <http://www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/research/cuk-valuing-carers-2015-web.pdf>

Research suggests the true figure may be four times higher³. That means there are somewhere between 1 and 4 young carers in every class. However, Welsh Government figures show only 782 young carers are known to social services in Wales⁴.

1.7. Each year in Wales around 1,600 carers start university⁵.

1.8. Young and young adult carers face significant challenges throughout school, college, and university, and when seeking employment

1.9. Research conducted by the University of Nottingham and commissioned by Carers Trust⁶ found that:

- Young adult carers achieve on average 9 grades lower at GCSE level than those without caring responsibilities
- One in four carers in school said they had been bullied as a result of their caring responsibilities
- Young adult carers are four times more likely to drop out of college or university
- Young adult carers are more likely to be not in education, employment, or training
- Nearly half of young adult carers (45%) reported having mental health problems
- Carers in school miss or cut short on average 48 days of school a year, that's nearly five school weeks

1.10. There are a number of straight forward and affordable solutions that would help support young and young adult carers

1.11. **Identification:** implementing simple systems to identify carers in schools, colleges and universities would mean that education providers are better placed to get support to those who need it. It would also provide a much clearer picture of how many carers are in education in Wales and where they're studying

1.12. There are different ways to improve identification:

³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-11757907>

⁴ https://carers.org/sites/files/carers.org/related_documents/timetobeheardcampaign_english.pdf

⁵ This projection is based on the number of first year entrants to Welsh HE (approx. 40,000) and an estimated 4% of those students being carers (based on the findings of NUS UK research with a sample size of 14,000).

⁶ https://carers.org/sites/files/carers.org/related_documents/timetobeheardcampaign_english.pdf

- UCAS has committed to introducing a tick-box to identify carers starting university from 2018
- Some universities ask students at enrolment, extending this would be the most immediate way to improve identification in higher education
- Many schools and local authorities in Wales use young carer ID cards, feedback from our local services and our Young Adult Carer Council suggest these IDs are effective in alleviating pressure from young carers in class and in supporting identification of young carers. We've been calling for young carer ID cards to be extended across Wales
- In further education, we welcomed the amended guidance for Education Maintenance Allowance that instructs FE providers, when considering whether to authorise an absence, to take into account any absences which may be a result of caring responsibilities. However, this is dependent on the FE provider being aware of a student's caring responsibilities. We believe that application forms for further education providers need to include a question on caring responsibilities.

1.13. **Support:** Support for young carers and young adult carers is inconsistent across Wales. We are in the process of mapping support across Wales- young carers and young adult carers have require different from services yet many areas only provide either young carer support or young adult carer support, not both.

1.14. Simple steps such as having an identified carers' champion staff member at schools, college and universities and a named point of contact for carers to seek support, can make a big difference. Similarly, incorporating carer awareness into teacher training provision would improve identification, awareness and support.

1.15. We would happily elaborate on specific steps schools, colleges and universities could take to improve support for carers. We detail [many of the steps here](#).

1.16. Any consideration of young and young adult carers' needs must take into account the availability of support services, the ways these services work with health, education and social care, and the consistency of funding of those services.

1.17. Implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales)

Act: The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 brought in important new rights for young and young adult carers, including a stronger entitlement to an assessment and a duty on local authorities to take into account transitions a young adult carer may be experiencing (ie. school to college, college to university). The feedback we have received from the Young Adult Carer Council so far suggests that these duties are not currently being fully delivered upon. We would ask the committee look ...?