

The Scottish Government recognise that there are at least **29,000** young carers in Scotland. Further extensive survey work by young carers services and Carers Trust show that **1 in 5** children in a class has a caring role, however, the number of young carers recorded across schools in Scotland is significantly lower. Many young carers struggle to juggle their education and caring responsibilities which can cause pressure and stress, with the right support being at school can be respite for a pupil who is a carer. Without support, young carers finding attending school difficult.

At Carers Trust, our definition of a young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems. Young carers tell us year on year that education is still one of the biggest challenges they face, often with teachers not understanding their caring role:

“School and teachers to help me. To understand that my family and I are judged by others. Sometimes it gets too much. We are isolated and excluded.” (Young Carer: CTS 2019 Survey)

“I sometimes wish it didn’t have to be this way, I feel like I’m living a very abnormal life from most teenagers and I don’t get the advantage I want from being one as I feel like I’m living under a rock. Most importantly whenever I try to explain this to my friends they don’t seem to empathise and understand me they think it’s just how it’s meant to be... but everyday it’s a constant battle. It feels unfair. I want to do something to push this message out to all schools.” (Young Carer: CTS 2019 Survey)

“I want school to understand (Young Carer: Scottish Young Carers Festival).

Carers Trust Scotland working in partnership with Young Carer Services are offering free Young Carer Awareness training to all Education Staff, including Probationer and Student Teachers across Scotland. During 2019/2020 we delivered training to over 500 Probationer and Student Teachers.

The training outcomes are:

- Increased understanding of what constitutes being a young carer.
- Increased understanding of the impact of unpaid care on a young carers education.
- Increased understanding of the policy and legislation context relevant to carers/young carers.
- Increased confidence of how to identify and support young carers.

See below for feedback we have received about the training –

“I feel better informed to identify a young carer and the next steps I can take to offer support”

“I feel so much more informed about what a young carer is, what issues they may face and what support is available”

“The session covered everything I expected and more, I learned a lot about what young carers need and are entitled to – Thank you!”

If you would like to hear more about this free training or further information about young carers in education please contact Kelly Munro, Education Officer (Primary and Secondary), Carers Trust Scotland by email kmunro@carers.org