

PE1470/S

**Response from Scottish Borders Council to Public Petition PE1470 -
Young Carer's grant**

Questions for local authorities:

- What are your views/experience on the issues raised in the petition?
- How well do the policies aimed at supporting the needs of young carers work in practice?

Scottish Borders Council supports the aims of this Petition. We have an active Young Carers project in partnership with Action for Children that seeks to support our young carers.

The people working with our young carers and the young carers themselves report that this role can lead to isolation and to young people missing out on a normal childhood. This can lead to reduced educational opportunities which can adversely affect their future life chances and job prospects. We agree that specific grants to enable young carers to participate in full time education would be of great assistance to this group of young people.

The petition raises the issue of Educational Maintenance Award being removed from some Young Carers due to their non attendance at school as a result of carrying out caring tasks. We have recently reviewed our Schools Attendance policy and have made specific reference to the impact caring tasks can have on school attendance, and how attendance can be an indicator of a child or young person being a young carer.

A difficulty remains in identifying young carers, particularly as a proportion do not self-identify as such. Our Young Carers Strategy seeks to address this issue through educating the staff groups working with children and young people in the Borders, and young people themselves, as to what makes a person a young carer and what support is available. We would hope that any further policy development around Young Carers recognises this issue.

Scottish Borders Council would welcome more support being made available to young carers via the Scottish Government, improving the life chances of young carers through supporting access to education.