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19 June 2013



By email: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Stuart Todd
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

PEOPLE
Strategic Director:
Margo Williamson

Dear Mr Todd

PUBLIC PETITION PE 1470: ESTABLISHMENT OF YOUNG CARERS GRANT

Thank you for your correspondence asking for views on aspects of Petition PE 1470, which calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to establish a Young Carer's Grant for carers in full-time education or under the age of 18.

What are your views/ experience on the issues raised in the petition?

Angus Council believes that where Young Carers are identified every opportunity should be given to enable Young Carers to achieve the same life opportunities as their peers. It recognises that many Young Carers face challenging pressures in balancing educational and employment opportunities with that of their caring responsibilities. This can adversely affect their future life chances and job prospects.

Within the petition concerns were raised in relation to the payment of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) due to issues of falling attendance related to commitments to care. While I am not aware of this as an issue within Angus Council this will be raised within appropriate forums in order to explore further.

It is suggested that a review of current provision of supports to young carers is required. It is also noted that there are issues in relation to the identification of young carers and therefore also highlights that young people who are not assessed or consider themselves as young carers would be disadvantaged.

Angus Council would be supportive of increasing support to young carers through the Scottish Government in linking this with the work already undertaken by the council and its partners. However this would require to be done in a way that does not put in force unsustainable administrative or financial burdens on local authorities or voluntary organisations.

Providing a young carers grant as opposed to EMA would not necessarily encourage young people to stay on at school.

How well do the policies aimed at supporting the needs of young carers work in practice?

Support for young carers in Angus is provided both by Angus Council and by Angus Carers Centre's Young Carers Service and NHS Tayside. Angus Young Carers work in partnership with schools to raise awareness of the issues which young carers face in their caring role and enable school staff to identify and seek support for young carers.

Support required for young carers may also be identified through staged intervention and the integrated assessment.

The awareness raising sessions in schools have been crucial in raising awareness as well as assisting young people in identifying themselves. This has led to the recognition in a gap of resources to work with these young people. As a result we are looking to address this by seeking further funding to secure an additional resource.

Angus, along with a neighbouring authority, carried out research into the support needs of young adult carers. The research reported that the needs of young adult carers are not being fully met by the current configuration of services. Although the support needs of young adult carers may reflect those of both young carers and older adult carers, significant differences exist. Young adult carers have specific support needs associated with their transition to adulthood. The research also highlighted that Angus are likely to have a significant population of unidentified young adult carers.

Angus has a large rural population which is spread over a large geographical area. The emotional and social isolation of young adult carers may well be exacerbated by the experience of physical isolation and this can act as a barrier to accessing services. It is important that any young adult carers' service addresses the extra financial costs associated with living in such large rural council areas.

As a result of Angus Young carers have secured funding through NHS carer information strategy funding this need to be confirmed with Kaye Wiseman which will allow further work around transition to adulthood to be carried out.

Angus council has also chosen to take forward the development of the Young Carers Card in partnership with Angus carers centre.

'Getting it Right for Young Carers' – the young carers' strategy for Scotland 2010-2015 provides a framework for action and highlights much of the issues within the petition. These action points have assisted authorities to improve practice and ensure supports are in place.

If calling or telephoning please ask for Fiona Robertson, Principal Officer Extended Support for Pupils, on 01241 803461 or e-mail anpbRobertsonF@panbride.angus.sch.uk.

Yours sincerely

Susan Duff
Senior Education Manager

cc: Fiona Robertson, Principal Officer Extended Support for Pupils 3-18
Tim Armstrong, Senior Manager, Social Work and Health
Robin Duncan, Service Manager (Children's Services)