



Young People's Rights Review

Lauren Baigrie MSYP - Financial Support for Young and Young Adult Carers in Employment and Education.

My name is Lauren Baigrie and I am the Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament for Carers Trust Scotland. I have been researching and consulting with young carers across Scotland on the lack of financial support available while in education and in employment.

Young carers at school have access to EMA. However it has been highlighted that at £30 per week it is not enough for young people that don't have a stable family financial income, as many parents are prevented from working by disability. For some young carers they don't qualify for EMA because their household income is just above the threshold, meaning they are in the "working poor" bracket.

Young carers in fulltime education don't qualify for carers allowance, which currently stands at £62.70 per week.

We commend the Scottish Government for seeing an issue with financial support, and introducing the Young Carer Grant. However, as it is a one-off payment, I am concerned about what young people are to do once it is spent.

My consultations found that many feel that financial support is insufficient. As a result, many young people over the age of 16 are trying to juggle education, part time work and a fulltime caring responsibility. Financial support would allow these young people the means to put more time into education.

When young carers are faced with choosing between EMA and Carers Allowance, Carers Allowance often wins as it is over double the amount of money. However in order for them to be granted CA they need to leave school. This does not protect their right to education, or uphold their right to protection from work.

The current NMW for under 18 year olds is £4.20 but if you claim carers allowance and are caring for the minimum 35 hours per week to qualify, this works out at £1.79 per hour. In contrast, a care assistant in Glasgow has an average hourly rate of £8.45. The numbers just don't seem to add up and NMW doesn't take into account that a 17 year old could be the sole wage earner in a household.

We recommend considering a consistent level of financial support that is awarded because a young person is a young carer and not because of the possible income of their parents.

We welcome the New Young Carer Grant, however, we also encourage MSPs to constantly develop and monitor it, as there is concern it won't be enough of an incentive for young people to remain at school when they are 18.

The Government say they are committed to allowing young people to continue on in further and higher education. Young carers can't do this if we need to choose between our next meal and the bus fare for school in the morning.

While carers allowance and the young carer grant have my full support, the Scottish Government are missing out support for a key group: young adult carers aged 18-25 who are in full-time education and are currently offered absolutely no financial support. Often these young people have left the family home and are living at their place of study. Many often commute to and from their family homes to help look after loved ones. Even though they are not in the home full time anymore, the caring role doesn't stop. Due to the cost of living away from home, SAAS rarely covers living expenses. Because of this, we are required to work part-time jobs at university like most other students. However, living away from home as well as working a part time job, caring full time and being at university fulltime doesn't leave any time to be a young person. By having financial support in addition to SAAS, young carers would have more space to breathe, enjoy their university years and excel in their education.