

Student Carers Policy

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STUDENT CARERS POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy aims to outline the support the College offers to students who have a caring responsibility, in order to:

- help them balance their study and caring commitments;
- access emotional and practical support;
- ensure college staff that have a role in advising or supporting students are aware of the support provision to enable students make the most of their time at college.

The College is committed to removing barriers to study for students who have caring responsibilities. We acknowledge that many of our students, in addition to their studies, have to deal with the daily demands of caring for a relative or friend. We want to provide a culture and environment which is inclusive and responsive to the needs of our students.

The College recognises our duty under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent discrimination, including discrimination by association, which is when you are discriminated against because of the protected characteristic (e.g. disability, age) of someone you know or are caring for. We acknowledge the challenges faced by students who are carers. This policy sets out how the College will identify and support such students in order for them to access the necessary support to have the best opportunity to succeed in their course.

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 is new legislation for carers which came into effect on the 1st April 2018. This Act extends and enhances the rights of carers to help ensure better and more consistent support for both adult carers and young carers. The College is therefore, committed to supporting our student carers, enabling them to succeed.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy covers both prospective and current students who have caring duties and responsibilities.

3. Definition

A carer is anyone who looks after a friend or family member who can't cope alone due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction.¹ Anyone can be a carer. Carers come from all communities, all cultures and can be any age. Many people don't recognise themselves as carers. There are an estimated 759,000 carers aged 16+ in Scotland - 17% of the adult population and an estimated 29,000 young carers in Scotland - 4% of the child population (aged 4-15).²

¹ <https://www.careinfoscotland.scot/topics/support-for-carers/are-you-a-carer/>

² <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/03/1081/2>

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Caring duties and responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Practical tasks, like cooking, housework and shopping
- Personal care, like washing, dressing and helping with toileting needs
- Managing the household budget, and collecting benefits and prescriptions
- Giving medication
- Emotional support

4. Identification

Disclosure of carer responsibilities can be made as part of our application and enrolment process, either at the point of registration, or at a later stage. Students also have the facility to update this information through the Student Portal at any time.

All students are encouraged to disclose their carer status during their time at the College. This is to ensure the necessary support provision can be made available to them.

This information is shared with the Named Staff Contact for those students with caring responsibilities and allows for targeted communications throughout their time as a student. It also highlights to Course Tutors through the class register those students who are carers. This enables staff to provide tailored support during guidance sessions, identify issues that may arise in a timely manner and arrange a referral for additional support, if appropriate.

The College recognises that students may not be carers upon joining the College but may become carers at some point during their time at college. Student Carers may be directed to the Named Staff Contact at any stage.

5. The Named Staff Contact for Student Carers

This role is assumed by the Guidance & Support Advisor in Student Services and is located in the Student Advice Centre. The Named Staff Contact will provide 1:1 support and advocacy for Student Carers and liaise with faculties in order to identify support provision.

6. Support for Student Carers

The College is committed to supporting our student carers and enabling them to succeed. Students should advise their designated Guidance Tutor or Named Staff Contact at the earliest opportunity in order to discuss support needs. All information that is shared will be dealt with in a confidential manner. This discussion will allow for a range of options to be considered, aiming to be as flexible as possible, whilst ensuring that disruption to learning is minimised. Wherever possible, the College will aim to tailor support for each student's individual needs without compromising academic standards.

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How we support Student Carers:-

Named Staff Contact:

- They will provide confidential advice and emotional support to help with your caring role.
- Offer of a visit to the College to help with orientation.
- Discuss course options and provide help with completing relevant forms.
- Provide guidance and support on funding, childcare, accommodation and travel.
- Introduce you to the Learning Development Team.
- Help you access additional support services, such as, the counselling and chaplaincy services, mindfulness and yoga classes or mental health and wellbeing services.
- Meet with you regularly and provide ongoing support.
- Discuss how you are progressing with your studies and offer support on your next steps after college.

Course Guidance Tutor:

- Your designated Course Guidance Tutor will guide you through your academic journey, provide ongoing guidance and support to give you the best opportunity of completing your studies.
- Complete and agree a Student Carer's Plan, if applicable. The Student's Carer Plan should be agreed between the student and the Faculty detailing any arrangements required during the period in which care is being provided. The plan should be retained in the Student's Guidance Folder. A copy of the plan should be made available to the student and also to other appropriate members of staff. However, the student's consent should be sought prior to passing on information.
- Make a referral to the Learning Development Support Team, if necessary.
- Discuss flexible attendance and support provision.
- Allow time out of study for an agreed amount of time if caring responsibilities are required.
- Give Authorised Absences for periods of medical appointments, where the student carer is required to provide support or transport, and making arrangements for the student to catch up on missed classes where practical.

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- Show a degree of flexibility regarding assignment deadlines if the student's circumstances make it difficult for them to be met.

7. Internal Support Provision

The College has a range of support services which all students can access and where appropriate Student Carers should be made aware of the provision. This includes services, such as, the Learning Development team who support students who may require additional support with their learning or have a disability, Student Counselling Service, Chaplaincy Service, Finance Team and Student Services staff who deliver a wide range of guidance and support provision.

The Named Staff Contact works in close partnership with a wide range of external organisations and charities which support those with caring responsibilities. They will liaise with these organisations to highlight what external support is available to our students and share best practice wherever possible.

8. Sources of Information and Help

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 is designed to support carers' health and wellbeing and help make caring more sustainable. Measures from 1 April, 2018 include:

- a duty for local authorities to provide support to carers, based on the carer's identified needs which meet the local eligibility criteria;
- a specific adult carer support plan and young carer statement to identify carers' needs and personal outcomes;
- a requirement for local authorities to have an information and advice service for carers which provides information and advice on, amongst other things, emergency and future care planning, advocacy, income maximisation and carers' rights.

Lanarkshire Carers

<https://lanarkshirecarers.org.uk>

Lanarkshire Carers works to empower carers to take a full part in all areas of its work and believes that carer involvement should be more than consultation. It should empower carers to take a central role in designing, developing and delivering services and to take ownership and responsibility for services.

Lanarkshire Carers is a valuable resource to carers, carers groups and organisations. Their aims:

- Carers in Lanarkshire are identified to ensure that they are informed, supported and empowered to manage and sustain their caring roles
- Carers can access breaks from their caring role and enjoy a life outside caring

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- Preventative and emotional support is available to carers at an early stage and ongoing throughout their caring journey
- Carers have a voice which is heard, listened to and effective
- Carers receive training and development relevant to their caring role
- Communities and partner organisations are aware of carers and their issues
- Ensure carers are aware of their rights and are recognised and valued as equal partners in care

Hamilton Centre

Unit 1a Princes Gate
60 Castle Street
Hamilton
ML3 6BU

T: 01698 428090

E: info@lanarkshirecarerscentre.org.uk

H: Monday - Friday: 9:00am to 4:30pm

Carers Scotland

<https://www.carersuk.org/scotland>

T: 0808 808 7777

Carers Scotland – making life better for carers.
Carers UK:

- give expert advice, information and support
- connect carers so no-one has to care alone
- campaign together for lasting change
- innovate to find new ways to reach and support carers.

Carers Trust

<https://carers.org/>

Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers.

E: info@carers.org

Student Award Agency Scotland (SAAS)

Funding for Higher Education Student Carers

<https://www.saas.gov.uk/guides/living-costs-grants>

SAAS have created an information document specifically for Student Carers to advise on what funding might be available.

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South Lanarkshire College
Funding for Further Education Student Carers
Bursary Team

T: 01355 807780

E: bursaries@slc.ac.uk