

# Island Communities Impact Assessment for the Young Carer Grant

## Introduction

1. The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018<sup>1</sup> provides for a new duty on the Scottish Ministers and other relevant public bodies that they must have regard to island communities in exercising their functions and in the development of legislation.
2. Section 13 of the 2018 Act obliges the Scottish Ministers to prepare an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) in relation to legislation which, in their opinion, is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities in Scotland.

## Executive Summary

3. In November 2018, officials from the Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland met with Young Carers on Islay and Lewis & Harris to discuss the Young Carers Grant (YCG) and the specific challenges that young carers face in island and remote communities.
4. This ICIA has considered the potential effects of the YCG and how it impacts on people living in island communities, presented below in the **Key findings** section. The findings here are based on desk research, engagement with and feedback from young carers living in island and remote communities and analysis of the Scottish Government's consultation on YCG. The consultation on YCG ran for 12 weeks from 17 September until 10 December 2018. A total of 75 Responses were received. Of these responses 56 were submitted by individuals and 19 came from organisations.
5. We are extending the ICIA by considering the rurality and remoteness in the same spirit of the Act to gauge evidence whether the policy and regulations will impact rural/remote communities differently to other communities.
6. Work on the guidance and template for the ICIA is currently being progressed in tandem with consultation on the National Islands Plan with a view to ensuring this is in place as soon as possible.
7. In accordance with section 13 of the 2018 Act, this ICIA has:
  - Identified and described areas where YCG will have an effect on an island community which is likely to be significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities);
  - Consulted and worked with island communities to develop the assessment of the extent to which the Scottish Ministers consider that YCG can be developed in such a manner as to improve or mitigate, for island communities, the outcomes resulting from it;

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<sup>1</sup> Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2018/12/enacted>

- Considered and proposed mitigation or actions to support the aims of YCG within the island communities; and
  - Considered any financial implications of the above.
8. This impact assessment is one of a package to accompany YCG. The others are: Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA); Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRIWA); and Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA).

## **Policy Background**

9. The Young Carer Grant (YCG) is new policy and will be delivered on an entitlement basis. It will consist of a £300 one off payment, which can be applied for annually, for young carers aged 16-18 with significant caring responsibilities who meet all of the eligibility requirements.
10. The policy intends to provide additional financial resource for young people with significant caring responsibilities. It is expected to help these young people improve their health and education outcomes by offering financial assistance and have a life alongside caring. This will break down barriers that they can experience in accessing opportunities that are the norm for many other young people. YCG will also help to alleviate material deprivation and tackle economic inequality.
11. Additional provision for young carers was proposed in the Scottish Government's consultation on Social Security in Scotland, which ran from 29 July 2016 to 28 October 2016. On 20 September 2017 the First Minister announced a new package of support for young carers, with YCG as its centrepiece, which will be paid by autumn 2019. Also announced in the package of support was that recipients of YCG will be provided with free bus travel from 2020/2021 subject to successful piloting and the introduction of a bespoke carer element to the Young Scot National Entitlement Card, providing non-cash benefits for young carers aged 11-18, which will be rolled out from June 2019.
12. The policy aligns closely with the Healthier, Wealthier and Fairer Strategic Objectives, but also links with the Smarter Objectives as well.
13. The policy contributes to the following National Outcomes:
- We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential
  - We are healthy and active
  - We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally
  - We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
  - We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.

14. Specifically, it is intended that the YCG will help deliver the social security outcomes that carers:
- are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing, improve their quality of life and reduce any negative impact of caring.
  - participate fully in society and, if they choose, engage in training, education and employment opportunities, as well as social and leisure activities.
  - have an increased sense of control and empowerment over their lives.
15. Eligibility for the YCG will require that the young person is caring for someone who is normally paid a specific qualifying disability benefit. They must also be providing care for an average of 16 hours per week for a minimum of three months, be a habitual resident in Scotland and not be in receipt of Carer's Allowance.
16. Research has shown that many young adult carers are more likely to be living in low income households, feel socially isolated and have poorer physical and mental health and wellbeing than non-carers.<sup>2 3 4</sup> The grant will mainly affect young adult carers with significant caring responsibilities aged 16 to 18 and is designed to provide additional financial resource to these young people to help improve their outcomes and provide some recognition of their unpaid caring role and their contributions to society.
17. The principle of co-design has been central to developing the approach to delivering YCG. The Scottish Government has established the Young Carer Panel and has reached out to third sector organisations that support young people with protected characteristics. This encouraged engagement to ensure all young people with lived experience can help to shape the policy for the young people of Scotland.
18. The Young Carer Grant Working Group was established in October 2017. It consists of young carer representatives, young carer services, local and national carer organisations, national youth organisations and COSLA. The group helped to gather evidence, bring a variety of informed perspectives and provided feedback on proposals.
19. A Young Carer Panel was set up in early 2018. The Young Carer Panel was made up of young carers and young adult carers aged 16 to 25 years old. Panel members had the opportunity to take part in research and participation exercises such as focus groups and surveys. Initial findings from 15 focus groups, carried

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<sup>2</sup> Carers Trust Scotland (2015) [Time to be Heard for Young Adult Carers](#)

<sup>3</sup> Carers UK (2017) [State of Caring 2017](#), Carers Scotland (2017) [State of Caring in Scotland 2017](#)

<sup>4</sup> Carers UK as part of the Jo Cox Loneliness Commission (2017) [The world shrinks: Carer loneliness](#)

out across the country in 2018, were published on the Scottish Government website.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Scope of the ICIA**

20. The scope of this ICIA is the impact of YCG on unpaid young carers, and the people they provide care for, who live in remote or island communities.

### **Key Findings**

21. This section provides an overview of issues for Scottish rural/remote communities that are relevant for YCG policy and regulations.

22. Island stakeholders have emphasised the importance of understanding the island experience. Each island has its own specific considerations and constraints.

23. Rural Scotland accounts for 98% of the land mass of Scotland and 17% of the population are resident there.<sup>6</sup>

24. Scotland had 93 inhabited islands with a total population of 103,700 - 2% of Scotland's population as per 2011 Census.<sup>7</sup> Of these islands, only five are connected to the Scottish mainland by bridge or causeway.<sup>8</sup>

25. The Islands Act identifies 6 local authorities representing island communities in Part 4 of the Act (Section 20 (2)), which are Argyll and Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar/ Western Isles, Highland Council, North Ayrshire Council, Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council. Amongst them, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles are entirely island authorities, while Highland, Argyll and Bute and North Ayrshire local authorities cover island regions as well as mainland regions.

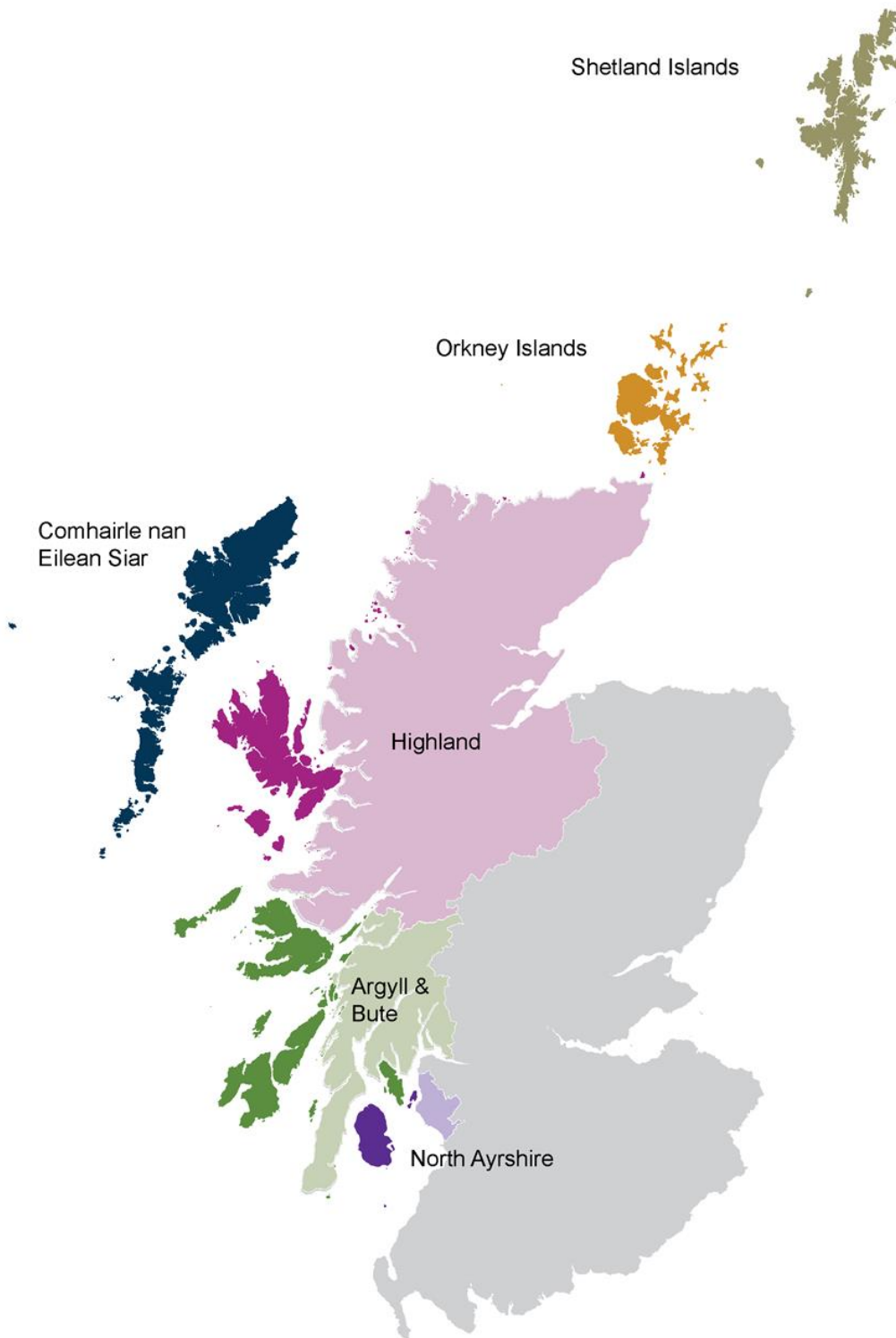
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<sup>5</sup> Social Security Experience Panels: Initial Findings of the Development of the Young Carer Grant - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/2018/11/social-security-experience-panels-initial-findings>

<sup>6</sup> [Key facts on rural Scotland 2018](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Scotland's Census 2011: Inhabited islands report 2015 \(NRS\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> Haswell-Smith, H. (2004). The Scottish Islands: A Comprehensive Guide to Every Scottish Island. Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd



**Figure 1:** Map highlighting all 6 local authorities representing Island Communities (islands in darker shades where islands are part of mainland LAs)

(Source: [research briefings 2017 on Islands Scotland Bill](#) )

## Demography and health

26. The population of the islands increased by 4 per cent (3,963) between 2001 and 2011. This reversed a decline in the population of the islands by 3 per cent between the 1991 and 2001.<sup>3</sup>
27. Most of this increase was driven by 4 of the 93 islands with a population of 10,000 or more, representing two-thirds of total island populations.
- Lewis and Harris with population of 21,031 (6% increase from 2001),
  - Mainland of Shetland with population of 18,765 (7% increase from 2001),
  - Mainland of Orkney with population of 17,162 (12% increase from 2001) and
  - Skye with population of 10,008 (12% increase from 2001).
28. Remote rural areas have a higher (25%) proportion of older people (65+) than the rest of Scotland (18%).<sup>9</sup> For males, the life expectancy in remote rural and accessible rural areas is around 79 years, nearly 3 years more than in the rest of Scotland. For females, the life expectancy in rural areas is around 82 years, nearly 2 years more than in the rest of Scotland
29. In 2016, the proportion of people reporting having a long term health condition or illness was 27% in urban areas and 24% in rural areas.

## Geography/ Transport

30. Young carers consulted as part of this ICIA identified geography and transport as key issues for them. The distances young carers have to travel to access services are greater than the distance urban young carers face to access the equivalent services.
31. Young carers in island and remote communities do not have the same access to carers services and young carer groups that young carers do in urban areas. Even where groups do meet, the cost of travel can still be prohibitive. Young carers reported that a £4-5 return fare is a significant amount for many of them. The free bus pass element of YCG, delivered through the Young Scot Card subject to successful piloting in 2020/21, will eliminate this barrier.
32. Young carers in island communities have said that a bus pass which identified them as a young carer to the driver could be a barrier to applications to YCG. This is because islands and remote communities are typically served by a small fleet of buses with drivers that are familiar to residents. Therefore there are extra sensitivities around privacy in island communities where young carers may not want other members of the community to be aware of their responsibilities.

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<sup>9</sup> [Rural Scotland Key Facts 2015](#)

33. Bus services in remote and island communities can be unreliable. This has resulted in some young carers suggesting that a free bus pass, although helpful, may not be of as much benefit as a ferry pass.
34. We are therefore intending to monitor the introduction of the free bus pass when it is piloted in 2020/21. We will continue to engage with stakeholders to understand the impact of the free bus pass on young carers living in island and remote communities.

### **Eligibility**

35. A more limited subject choice in remote and rural schools means that young people in island communities are more likely to attend college for Nat 5 and Higher courses whereas young people in urban areas on the mainland are more likely to complete these courses at secondary school.
36. In response to points raised during the consultation on YCG, the Scottish Government committed to widen the eligibility criteria to all 16-18 year olds that meet the other eligibility criteria for YCG. This removed the previous requirement for 18 year olds be in education.

### **Cost of Living**

37. The cost of many amenities and activities are higher for young carers living in island communities than young carers living on the mainland.
38. A lack of choice and accessibility means that shopping, mobile phone services and broadband can be more expensive for young carers living in island communities compared to those on the mainland. The greater distances and remoteness means that day to day travel, postage, fuel, day-trips and holidays are also more expensive for young carers in remote communities.
39. Citizens Advice Scotland<sup>10</sup> have identified issues of grid, utilities, digital and travel as key barriers for people in accessible rural, remote rural and remote small towns. Furthermore, a typical food basket can cost as much as 50% more on island communities in Scotland, while transport can be up to £40 a week more expensive due to longer distances for commuting and a higher price for petrol<sup>11</sup>.
40. According to the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), household budgets in remote rural Scotland are typically 10-40% higher than elsewhere in the UK.<sup>12</sup> For households in the most rural remote parts of Scotland, additional costs can be greater than 40%. HIE attribute these extra costs to three principal sources:

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<sup>10</sup> Sutherland, F (2015) Remotely excluded: barriers facing Scotland's rural consumers  
CAS, Edinburgh, 36pp

<sup>11</sup> A Minimum Income Standard: For Remote rural Scotland; Loughborough University, UHI & Highlands and Islands Enterprise; 2013

<sup>12</sup> [A Minimum Income Standard for Remote Rural Scotland, 2013](#)

- the higher prices that households must pay for food, clothes and household goods;
- much higher households fuel bills, influenced by climate and fuel sources;
- the longer distances that people have to routinely travel, particularly to work.

41. A range of work is being undertaken by the Scottish Government to address the challenges that people in island and rural communities face. For example the Islands Strategic Group<sup>13</sup> was established in August 2016. The group considers strategic issues affecting the island communities of Scotland, and to ensure greater involvement of the relevant councils in helping to identify and design solutions to the unique needs and challenges these communities face.

42. The Scottish Government will continue to engage with stakeholders beyond the launch of YCG to monitor the impact of the policy on the lives of young carers living in remote communities.

### **Culture**

43. Young carers identified potential cultural barriers to claiming YCG. This is because of the close-knit nature of island communities.

44. It is possible that stigma attached to identifying as a carer could act as a barrier to young people applying to YCG. The need for privacy and dignity is emphasised by young carers in remote and island communities. There is concern that the introduction of a new benefit may result in the disclosure of someone's disability or caring status.

45. The communication and implementation of the YCG will take into account the specific pressures of young carers living in remote and island communities and the sensitive nature of disclosing caring responsibilities and the receipt of disability benefits.

46. YCG, alongside a range of extra support for carers, intends to promote a positive carer identity alongside improving the health and education outcomes for young carers in remote and island communities. Young carers consulted as part of this ICIA emphasised that this will be important to address perceived stigma of being labelled a young carer.

### **Connectivity and accessibility**

47. According to the [research briefings 2017 on Islands Scotland Bill](#), residents of islands rely on ferry crossings and air travel to reach the mainland and larger

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/groups/islands-strategic-group/>



islands, and key services such as secondary and higher education, care, and medical services<sup>14</sup>.

48. In 2011, the proportion of island households with at least one car or van available was 79 per cent, compared with just over two-thirds (69 per cent) nationally<sup>15</sup>.
49. In remote rural areas, a high proportion (22%) of people work at home. This is higher than the proportion of people working at home in accessible rural areas (17%) and people in the rest of Scotland (10%). Young Carers living on islands and remote and rural communities have identified geography as a key challenge.
50. Many young carers cannot access the same opportunities as other young people because of their caring responsibilities. In rural remote areas and island communities, this disadvantage is compounded by a lack of access to opportunities that are more readily and frequently available to those on the mainland or in urban areas. Furthermore, a lack of accessibility to employment, education and leisure opportunities can be made more difficult when caring for someone with mobility issues especially when transport options are limited.
51. YCG recognises these challenges and, alongside other initiatives for carers and young carers such as free bus travel and the Short Breaks Fund<sup>16</sup>, aims to break down barriers so that young carers in remote communities can access the same opportunities that many other young people in Scotland access.

### **Implementation and delivery plan**

52. A communications strategy is being developed in advance of the launch of the YCG. This will ensure that young people who are eligible, the third sector, local authorities, the education sector and advice providers are aware of YCG, know how to apply and understand the eligibility criteria.
53. The communications strategy will be linked in with wider Scottish Government initiatives for carers and for remote and island communities. This will ensure that a positive young carer identity is promoted to young carers living in remote parts of Scotland.
54. We will ensure that YCG is linked into wider support for young carers living in rural, remote and island communities and linked in with social security policy more generally.

### **Monitoring and Review**

55. Monitoring the impact of YCG on young carers in island and remote communities will be a continuous process and where any unintended consequences are identified steps will be taken to rectify them. The Scottish Government will put in

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<sup>14</sup> Atterton, J. (2013) Rural Transport: Discussion at the Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Rural Policy, Rural Policy Centre, SRUC, Edinburgh. pp.2

<sup>15</sup> [Scotland's Census 2011: Inhabited islands report 2015 \(NRS\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Short Breaks Fund](#)

place a monitoring and evaluation plan for YCG prior to implementation which takes account of the issues identified within this impact assessment.

56. The Scottish Government has established the independent Scottish Commission on Social Security (SCoSS). YCG was the first benefit to be scrutinised by SCoSS. In total, SCoSS have made 17 recommendations on YCG detailed in their report on 17 May 2019. The Scottish Government will publish a response to the report and each recommendation alongside this Impact Assessment.
57. On-going stakeholder engagement with key organisations – such as Carers Trust Scotland, CBAG, Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance, Scottish Youth Parliament, Shared Care Scotland and Young Scot – will also provide the Scottish Government with an opportunity to monitor the impact of the policy.
58. The Scottish Government will pilot free bus travel for recipients of YCG in 2020/21 in partnership with Young Scot and will commit to exploring further and specific ways of supporting young carers in remote communities where other forms of transport are used more regularly.
59. The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 places a duty on the Scottish Ministers to report annually to the Scottish Parliament on the performance of the Scottish social security system during the previous financial year. The report is to describe what the Scottish Ministers have done in that year to meet the expectations on them set out in the Charter and will include information on the impact of island-proofing.
60. The Scottish Ministers have also committed to engaging with, and reporting regular progress to, the Islands Strategic Group<sup>17</sup> to ensure that those representing the interests of island communities and others with experience of the current system, are fairly represented in the development and delivery of the Scottish social security system.

## **Recommendations and Conclusions**

61. Through the work undertaken to produce this impact assessment in partnership and consultation with young carers and island local authorities, it is clear that living in island and remote communities present unique challenges for young carers.
62. Through this ICIA, the Scottish Government could not identify evidence that YCG will directly or indirectly discriminate against those that live in island or remote communities.
63. It is likely that YCG will have a positive impact on young carers in island and remote communities. YCG addresses a number of concerns and barriers described by young carers living in remote communities during workshops Scottish Government officials such as prohibitively expensive bus travel and a lack of time and money for leisure activities and day trips. Alongside other Scottish Government initiatives for carers, the evidence gathered in this ICIA

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/groups/islands-strategic-group/>

suggests that YCG will improve access to opportunities for young carers living in island communities that are available to other young people in Scotland.

- 64. Because a disproportionate number of young carers are from areas of multiple deprivation, it is likely that YCG will promote economic equality.
- 65. YCG has been co-designed with young carers and stakeholders. There will be continuous review of the impact of YCG to ensure it meets the needs of all young adult carers with significant caring responsibilities that it is designed to support.
- 66. The Scottish Government has concluded that no further changes to YCG are necessary as a result of the ICIA.

### **Authorisation**

I confirm that the impact of the Young Carer Grant has been sufficiently assessed against the needs of the equality duty:

<b>Name and Job Title of Policy Lead</b> Nicola Davidson, Young Carer Grant Policy Lead, Social Security	Date this version authorised: <b>19 June 2019</b>
<b>Name and job title of a Deputy Director or equivalent:</b> Ann McVie, Deputy Director, Social Security Policy Division	<b>19 June 2019</b>