

Social Security Young Carer Panel

What you've told us so far

Introduction

Scottish Government is creating a new grant for young carers.

To do this, we wanted to hear from young carers about their experiences and to work with them to help design how the new Young Carer Grant should work.

We met with young carer groups across Scotland. This report tells you what we have heard so far.



**So far we have spoken to
16 groups and 50+ young
carers**

What is a “Young Carer”

We asked the people who took part how they felt about the words “young carer”.



Some were happy with these words and would use them to describe themselves.

**Under
18?**

**Under
25?**

Not everyone felt that “young carer” meant the same thing. Some people felt that young carers would be under 18. Others felt that you could be older than that and be a young carer – for example up to 25 years old.



Some people preferred other words like “young adult carer” or just “carer”.

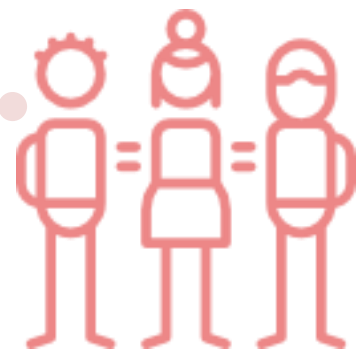
**Young
adult
carer?**

Carer?



Some people didn't like to talk about being a young carer with their friends. Reasons for this included because they didn't want to have to answer questions about it.

“I won't always tell people what I'm doing – I might say I'm going to a dentist appointment.”



The impact of being a young carer

Young carers described how this affected their lives.

Many felt that they didn't have enough time outside of caring.



This could affect:



Education



Getting a job



Seeing friends

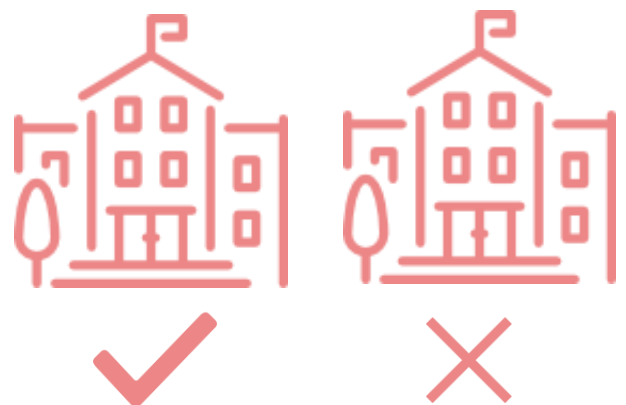
Others said that it affected their mental health. This included feeling stressed or anxious.



Reaching out to young carers

Help at school

Young carers said that the support in schools was very different depending on which school they go to, and who their teacher is.



Getting help

Some said they didn't know that they were a young carer, or that they could get support until someone told them. This was usually a social worker or teacher.



They suggested that young carers could be contacted using:

- Youth groups and sports clubs
- Religious groups
- TV
- Social media
- GPs and mental health services
- Charities that help disabled people



Young carer groups

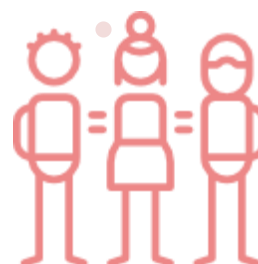
They felt that young carer groups were important and helped them meet other people like them.

They also learned new skills and could go on trips that they otherwise wouldn't have been able to.

New skills

Getting support

Making friends



They thought that people should be told about local young carer groups when they apply for the grant.

The amount of time you spend caring

Some respondents said that they felt that 16 hours caring per week was “reasonable” in order to be able to get the grant.



Others said that they would find it difficult to know how many hours they spent caring each week.

“I thought I did less than 16 hours, but then sat down with my young carers worker and worked out I was doing over 40 hours.”



This was because it might sometimes be more and sometimes be less, depending on how the person they look after was feeling.

Some people said that it is difficult to know what would count as caring. Some of them said that they didn’t realise how much caring they do until the young carer group helped them to realise.

What counts as caring?



How long you have been a carer for

Many people felt that it was fair to give the grant to people who had been caring for someone for at least 3 months.



But some said it is difficult to say how long they have been caring. For example if they had been looking after someone for a long time and didn't know any different.

"Difficult to know when I became a carer. I didn't know that was what I was doing. It was just normal to me."



Others said there should be some times when people should be able to get the grant sooner than 3 months. For example, if someone has a bad accident or suddenly gets very ill.

Applying for the grant

To make it simple to apply, people said that it should be:

- A short form
- use easy language
- make sure the questions are easy
- don't repeat questions
- you should be able to apply different ways, like online, on paper and in person.



What would you spend it on?

There was a wide variety of things that young carers would spend the grant on. These included:

- Travel costs
- Seeing friends



- Holidays



- Clothes



- Sport equipment



- Things for the house



- Gifts



- Things for school



- Things for the person they care for or other family member



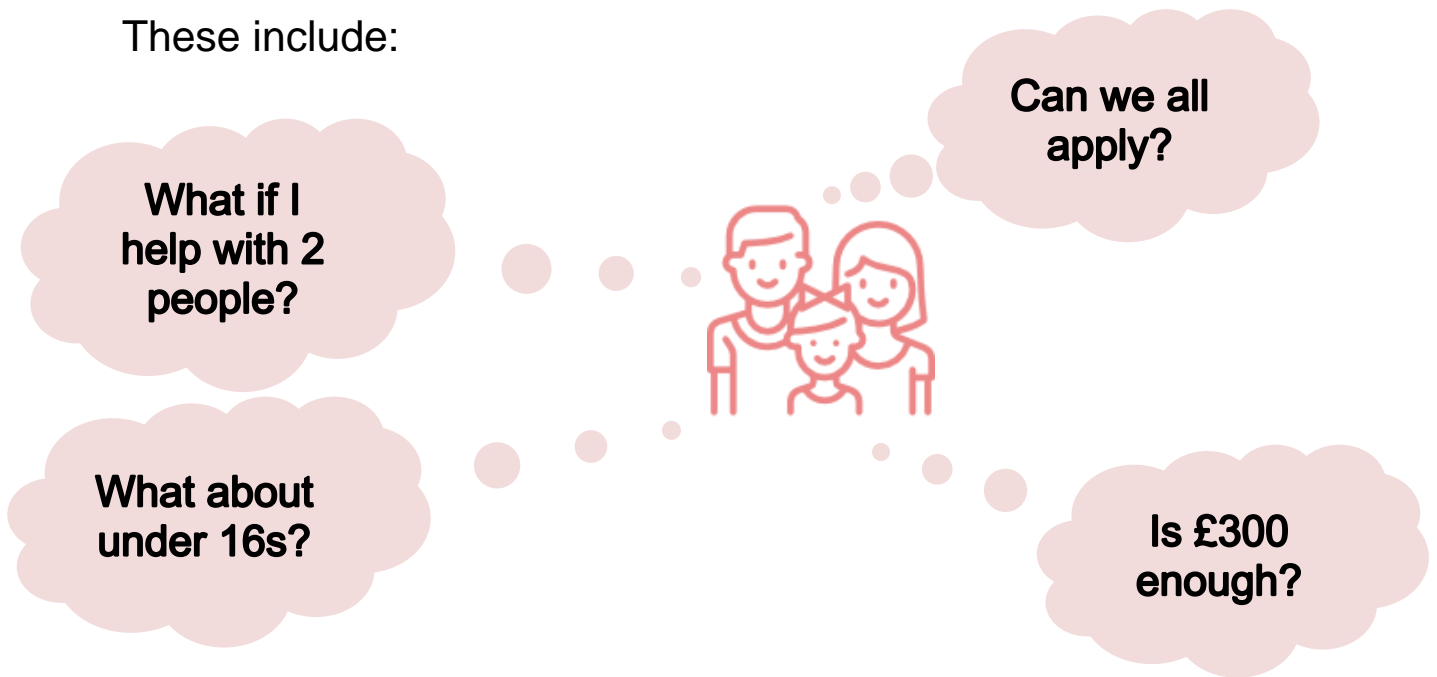
- Saving the money



Questions or concerns

Participants raised a number of questions or concerns about the grant.

These include:



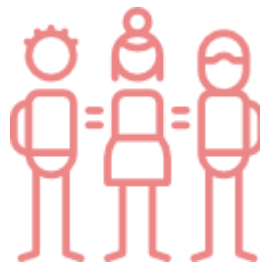
- How can we support young carers who are under 16, or who are older than 18 and can't get the grant?
- Can more than one young carer in a family get the grant?
- What if you care for more than one person?
- Is £300 enough to support young carers?

Positives and challenges

The young carers who took part told us some of the positives and challenges they face.

Challenges:

Challenges included not having enough time for their education and seeing friends, as well as how it affects their mental health.



Good things:

Some of the good things included making friends through young carer groups and learning new skills.



The grant:

Some challenges with the new grant include finding it hard to say how much time they spend caring, and how long they have been caring for.



Next steps

Young carers who took part have been invited to help us continue to design the new grant. We are also working to try to speak to young carers who are not part of an existing group.



How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

- ☐ are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- ☐ are available via an alternative route
- ☒ **may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact socialsecurityexperience@gov.scot for further information.**



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