

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	EDU/8/24

Committee: Education

Date: 30 May 2024

Report Title: Young Carers Statement & Strategy 2024 - 2026, Education & Learning

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the work being undertaken by Education & Learning Service, to strengthen the support offered to Young Carers and their families.
- 1.2 The report outlines our statutory duties to Young Carers in Highland and shares the consultation process and the support process for schools to ensure that all Young Carers, where requested or required, have access to a Young Carer Statement. It also outlines the improvement work on-going and includes an updated strategy for Education & Learning.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. To recognise the progress made by Education & Learning with regards the enhanced support for Young Carers.
 - ii. To agree the Young Carers Strategy and Statement for Education & Learning.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource: There is no additional resource required currently, however the distribution of Scottish Government budget allocations for adult and young carers is in discussion. Currently the funding is allocated to adult carers through the NHS and a proportion of this funding could be allocated to Young Carers.
- 3.2 Legal: The legal provisions are outlined at 4 of this report.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island): Addressing the current inequality of the provision of the offer of Young Carers Statements across the Highland area is integral to the improvement activity outlined within this report.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever: use of digital technology & managed information systems to support the climate change agenda

- 3.5 Risk: The approach set out in this report aims to mitigate the risk to Young Carers not having their rights supported.
- 3.6 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people): Potential wellbeing issues if Young Carers are not supported adequately.
- 3.7 Gaelic: No implications identified.

4. Overview

- 4.1 The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into force on 1 April 2018. A carer is someone who provides or intends to provide care for another person, but not if this is only because of the cared-for person's age (where they're under 18) or because of a contract or as voluntary work. A [young carer](#), in addition to the description of a carer above, is someone under the age of 18, or is aged 18+ and still at school.

The Scottish Government says:

“The Act extends and enhances the rights of carers and aims to better support carers on a more consistent basis so that they can continue to care, if they so wish, in good health and to have a life alongside caring.”

A Young Carer is different to a Care Experienced Young Person. The term 'care-experienced' refers to anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked after.

- 4.2 **Keeping The Promise for Highland's Young Carers** The Promise exists so that all children and young people can grow up loved, safe and respected. Keeping The Promise for Highlands' Young Carers will involve ensuring that the voices and choices of young people shape the services and support around them, and that co-production in this way will lead to better outcomes for all our Young Carers.
- 4.3 **UNCRC and Highland's Young Carers** Highland is committed to upholding the rights of all children and young people in ensuring they are protected from unfair treatment (discrimination, harassment and victimisation) under the Equality Act 2010 and that every child has the opportunity to grow up to maximise their full potential'. The UNCRC underpins children and families right to be heard and given voices and opportunities to shape service design and delivery and is therefore particularly relevant to Highland's Young Carers.
- 4.4 **Highland Council Integrated Children's Service Plan 2023 – 26** As per the principles of the Service Plan, the Young Carers Statement and strategy is part of the integrated service approach to ensure that the voice of Young Carers is at the heart of improvement and that every young person is given the opportunity to thrive and maximise their full potential:

“We will develop services that are informed and shaped by people with lived experience and place the voice of infants, children, young people and families at the heart of service improvement.”

Our Partnership is committed to upholding the rights of infants, children and young people in ensuring they are protected from prejudice and that every child has the opportunity to grow up to maximise their full potential.”

5. Highland's Young Carers Strategic Plan

- 5.1 Highland recognises that the needs of Young Carers can be complex and require a whole system approach to solutions. In partnership with Young Carers, this collaboration provides direction to the shape of services and support for Young Carers in Highland, for the future.
- 5.2 This YC Improvement Group reconvened (March 2024) to drive forward and update the strategic improvement work for Young Carers through a co-produced strategy which was agreed upon previously (2022 – 24) by the group. The updated strategy is included as Appendix 4. The Highland Young Carers Improvement Group includes members from each of the following organisations:
- Connecting Young Carers
 - TYKES
 - Caithness Klics
 - Skye and Lochalsh Young Carers
 - The Highland Council,
- 5.3 The Strategic Improvement Plan for Young Carers is focussed on achieving better outcomes for Young Carers, is led by their voices, choices and needs and will be data measured through a QI approach and model for improvement. **(See Appendix 4).**

6. Consultation Process

- 6.1 As part of the development of the Young Carers statement, there has been collaborative work between Health & Social Care & Education. The H&SC Committee update paper (dated 15th November 2023) and subsequent support from Scottish Government has formed the direction of the consultation work by the Education team. Whilst Health & Social Care do have a role to play in supporting Young Carers, many are supported by universal services, so Education has taken leadership responsibility for developing the support and process. Health & Social Care & Education have undertaken a partnership commitment to the Promise, UNCRC and Getting it Right for Every Child.

All work undertaken has been reflective of the ethos and agreements of 'the Promise' and consultation has included local representatives for 'the Promise'.

- 6.2 All four Carer Organisations that support Highland have been included in the consultation process and the Young Carer Improvement Group has reconvened. The strategy contained within this Committee report was initially written as a joint strategy pre-pandemic. This has been updated as part of this consultation process.
- 6.3 Since December 2023, Education & Learning has engaged with Scottish Government, Education Scotland, Third Sector Young Carer organisations, young people through the Highland Youth Parliament, and senior management and young people in schools to agree on a Young Carers Statement. The Young Carers consultation has been led by Tania Mackie, Senior Lead Manager, Specialist Support Services - Gayle Hunter, Additional Support Needs Officer - Lorna Hall, Additional Support Needs Officer & Emily Sharp, Acting Principal Teacher, Aviemore Primary School.

This process has been sensitive to the needs of those involved in the process.

6.4 Our statement and ethos to the consultation:

“When working with Young People we will be sensitive to the YC situation and ensure a safe space for open communication. Not all the questions will be relevant or appropriate. As a team we will endeavour to be open-ended and avoid leading questions. The YC will guide the conversation and we will listen actively and validate their experiences, showing empathy and understanding.

We will:

- *Focus on strengths and resilience as well as challenges.*
- *Offer specific support options or resources where possible.*
- *Respect their autonomy and decision-making.*
- *Ensure confidentiality and follow through on any promises made.”*

6.5 The process began with a co-operative activity and video for the young people.: As per the UNCRC, the Rights of a Child were fundamental to the consultation process and the pupil voice central to the development of the statement. A talking mats (co-operative learning approach) was used with the young people to gather views on a Jamboard. Please find a completed example in **Appendix 2**.

6.6 As a result, a Young Carers Statement has been produced that is digital, simple, meets legislative standards and can be supported proportionately by the school. The Highland Young Carers Statement is designed to be accessible to all age groups and learners, as it utilises assistive technology functions including speech to text, audio recording, simple text and a translation tool aids English as an Additional Language. As it is the young person who decides who shares the statement, this can be done digitally via a private link or printable PDF. **(See Appendix 3) or use the QR code to access the master template or use [this link](#) to play the book.**



7. Training for Educators

The Education Officer at Carers Trust in partnership with Education Scotland delivers Young Carer Awareness training for those who work in Education. The training is now available to all schools through Education Scotland GLOW and will also be available on the Schools Hub, Professional Learning Academy tile. We would encourage all those supporting Young Carers in schools to engage with the training.

8. Next Steps

8.1 In Highland it is agreed that the school at which the Young Carer is enrolled should offer and prepare the Young Carers Statement. Some Young Carers may only need a short simple plan whereas others might have a more detailed plan. In the case of more detailed planning, the Young Carer Statement can be included as part of the staged intervention

approach and child plan, although it is a separate document to the child's plan. **Please see Appendix 5 for Children & Young Person's Guide to completing a statement.**

- 8.2 It should be noted that not all Young Carers request or want a statement and this decision should be respected. However, if the school has knowledge of a Young Carer the school has a duty of care to record this within SEEMiS.
- 8.3 The Young Carers statement is also owned by the young person who will decide who it is shared with.
- 8.4 When a Young Carer turns 18, they transition from a Young Carer to an adult carer and any support agreed in the Young Carer Statement should stay in place until an Adult Carer Support Plan can be agreed.
- 8.5 Education & Learning, through the Young Carers Support networks, have identified funding provided within the local government block grant. Whilst this funding is currently passed on to NHS Highland who provide wider support to carers across our systems, Education is working with Health & Social Care to agree a proportion of these monies. This will provide greater resource in meeting the needs of Young Carers and their families and meeting our statutory function of providing Young Carers statements.
- 8.6 The Young Carers Improvement Group will continue to meet on a termly basis to ensure that there is a consistent approach to support across the Highland Council for Highland Young Carers.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 12 May 2024

Author: Tania Mackie, Senior Lead Manager, ASfL.

Background Papers: N/A

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Carers (Scotland) Act resources

Appendix 2 - An example of a collaborative activity with Young Carers from the consultation

Appendix 3 - Guidance to support the Young Carers Statement, The Highland Council - Schools

Appendix 4 – The Highland Council Young Carers Strategy

Appendix 5 - Young Carers Statement. A Guide for Children & Young People

Appendix 1

Carers (Scotland) Act resources:

- [The Carers Charter](#) gives an easy-to-read overview of the Carers Act, the definitions of unpaid carers/ Young Carers and the rights all carers have under the Act.
- For Young Carers you can also direct people to the [Jargon Buster](#) to help them better understand the words and phrases associated with the Carers Act. It is also useful for those who are less legislation literate
- Detailed [Statutory guidance on the Carers Act](#)
- The [mygov.scot webpage for carers](#) has been updated – the refreshed page brings together all the information relating to both adult and Young Carers under one page making it more user-friendly and streamlining the process of finding information.

Young Carer Statement resources:

- This is a video made as a collaboration between SG, Carers Trust Scotland and a young carer, where a policy official answers questions about YCS [\(1414\) What is a Young Carer Statement? \(Carers Trust Scotland\) - YouTube](#)
- An easy-to-read overview about YCS- [What is a Young Carer Statement? – Young Scot](#)
- The [Digital Education Hub](#), funded by SG and hosted by Carers Trust Scotland, on here you will see different Local Authority areas listed, click on these to see examples of the YCS they deliver as well as other Young Carer projects they may have specific to that area.

Education Resources:

- Website resource for all Highland Schools with links to guidance and templates - <https://sites.google.com/highlandschools.net/highlandschoolyoungcarers/info-for-ycs>
- A tool kit for teachers and other education staff to help understand who Young Carers are and what the legislative duties are around young carer statements [young-carers-in-education-a-resource.pdf](#)
- Links to e-modules that the Scottish Government Young Carers support developed in collaboration with Education Scotland and Carers Trust Scotland, the second module in particular deals with Young Carers statements:
 - <https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot/learn/learning-activities/supporting-young-carers-in-education-module-1-identifying-young-carers-in-education/step-1/>
 - <https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot/learn/learning-activities/supporting-young-carers-in-education-module-2-young-carers-and-the-law-their-rights-and-their-voice/step-1/>

- <https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot/learn/learning-activities/supporting-young-carers-in-education-module-3-ways-to-support-young-carers-in-education/step-1/>

Additional resources:

- The Knowledge Hub group is open to statutory sector Carer Leads to discuss issues and share resources: <https://khub.net/group/carers-scotland-act-2016-resource-sharing-group>
- Young Carers can sign up to the Young Scot Young Carer platform here: [Young Carers Package – Young Scot](#)



Appendix 3

Guidance to support the Young Carers Statement, The Highland Council - Schools

The Young Carer Statement

Every young carer has a right to a Young Carer Statement that contains information about the carers' role and their own circumstances.

It should include:

- The extent to which the young carer is able and willing to provide care
- How far the nature and extent of the care provided is appropriate
- What personal outcomes matter to have a life alongside caring and to improve their own health and wellbeing
- Support available to Young Carers locally
- Any support which the responsible local authority intends to provide.

Young Carers have a right to a 'young carer statement'

“The responsible authority must offer a Young Carer Statement to anyone they identify as a young carer. They must prepare a Young Carer Statement for anyone who accepts this offer.

They must also prepare a Young Carer Statement for anyone who meets the definition of young carer if the young carer requests one.”

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/carers-charter/pages/4/>

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into force on the 1st April 2018. A carer is someone who provides or intends to provide care for another person.

But not if this is only because of the cared-for person's age (where they're under 18) or because of a contract or as voluntary work.

A [young carer](#), in addition to the description of a carer above, is someone under the age of 18, or is aged 18+ and still at school.

The Scottish Government says:

“The Act extends and enhances the rights of carers and aims to better support carers on a more consistent basis so that they can continue to care, if they so wish, in good health and to have a life alongside caring.”

In Highland, schools are best placed to support the Young Carer Statement. School records should also be updated on SEEMiS to ensure, where known, a young carer is recorded. For support on how to do this please visit: [ASN tile on the MIS portal under FAQs](#)

There are many information sources available for educators about Young Carers, including the toolkit from the [Young Carers Trust](#)

The Young Carers Trust and Education Scotland have developed 3 online professional learning modules on GLOW. To access these, you log in using your GLOW credentials, then select Professional Learning – Professional Learning Activities – search Young Carers using the links below.

As long as you work with Young Carers then you can register to complete the Modules.

<https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot/learn/learning-activities/supporting-young-carers-in-education-module-1-identifying-young-carers-in-education/step-1/>

<https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot/learn/learning-activities/supporting-young-carers-in-education-module-2-young-carers-and-the-law-their-rights-and-their-voice/step-1/>

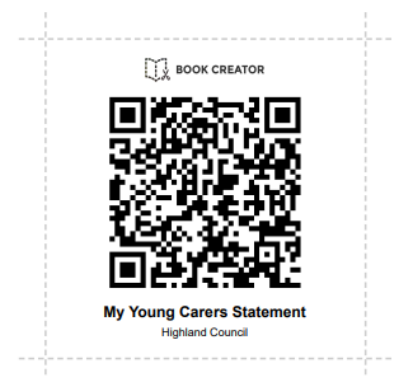
<https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot/learn/learning-activities/supporting-young-carers-in-education-module-3-ways-to-support-young-carers-in-education/step-1/>

When you complete the module please complete a brief note into the **Reflective Questions** sections. When you do, the Young Carers Trust is notified that you have completed the Module and you can also download a summary document of your learning. This can be attached to your own records for the purposes of PRD or CPD. You could even upload it directly into your GTCS/CLD Professional Update Records as the Modules are directly linked to the standards.

In Highland Schools, young people identified that they would prefer to use a Chromebook to complete their Young Carer Statement and they would like access to text, audio and pictures to do this. They can also then decide who they share their statement with.

Supporting a Young Carer to complete their statement.

A template to be used by all Highland Schools, has been created using bookcreator.com



You can access this by supporting the young person to use this [link](#) or the QR code below. The young person will need to use their Highland Gmail address to create a Book Creator account (if they haven't one already and then make a copy of the book. This is called 'remix' on the app. You can do this easily by visiting www.bookcreator.com

Steps to follow:

Visit www.bookcreator.com

Log in with your Highland Gmail address (if you are using Book Creator for the first time, you'll need to answer a few questions in order to create your account)

Use the link or QR code to access the Young Carers Statement master.


Create a copy by clicking on remix - this is important as the young person can then set their own permissions for sharing.

Please note: Any book that is created/remixed, will automatically be added to your library in Book Creator which allows easy and accessible access to edit or

read. With the standard, free Book Creator account, you'll be able to create and host up to 40 books in your library.

Book creator allows the text to be read by the young person, making the book accessible to all ages and audio, text or pictures can be added to personalise the book.

Please see below for images of the Young Carers Statement but use the Book Creator template for the actual editable version.



The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

MY YOUNG CARERS STATEMENT

SAFE - HEALTHY - ACHIEVING - NURTURED - ACTIVE - RESPONSIBLE - RESPECTED - INCLUDED

Identified needs:
What do you need to achieve your goals or personal outcomes. You might already know what some of these needs are or you might need to have a chat with a support worker to decide them.

IMPACT OF CARING?
WOULD YOU LIKE HELP?

SAFE - HEALTHY - ACHIEVING - NURTURED - ACTIVE - RESPONSIBLE - RESPECTED - INCLUDED

What are your goals for the future?
Is there anything you would like help with?

If things don't quite go to plan, what help might you need and who might help you?ight help?

WHO WOULD YOU LIKE THIS STATEMENT SHARED WITH?

PLEASE CHOOSE WHO YOU WOULD LIKE TO SIGN THIS STATEMENT

YOUNG CARER...

PARENT/CARER...

SCHOOL / SUPPORT WORKER...

OVER TIME, THINGS MAY CHANGE, WHEN WOULD YOU LIKE THE REVIEW DATE TO BE?

Personal circumstances:
Personal circumstances cover what your life is like, including who you live with, things you like doing and what you normally do each day.

Name: _____

DOB: _____

My School: _____

Where I live? _____

THINGS IN MY LIFE THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO ME:

AGE I STARTED CARING? WHO I LOOK AFTER?

HOW DO I CARE?

HOW I FEEL ABOUT MY CARING ROLE?

Personal outcomes: What are your aims, goals or hopes?
This could be something like wanting to be able to spend more time with your friends or feeling more supported at school.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF CARING?
WOULD YOU LIKE HELP?

SAFE - HEALTHY - ACHIEVING - NURTURED - ACTIVE - RESPONSIBLE - RESPECTED - INCLUDED

ACTION PLAN AND NEXT STEPS.





An action plan helps everyone understand what they are supposed to be doing.


Use this space to agree what this looks like for you, how this is going to be done and who should be helping you. You might also want to agree when this is going to happen too.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can register with a Young Carer Centre? They may be able to help you:

[Connecting Carers](#)
[Caithness KLICs](#)
[Tykes-Young Carers Sutherland](#)
[Skye and Lochalsh Young Carers.](#)

 Young Carers can also sign up to the young scot young carer platform [here](#).

Appendix 4



Highland Young Carers Strategy 2024 - 2026

Introduction

Highland has a number of children and young people who are undertaking a range of caring roles within their families. This can include having responsibility for providing emotional support, domestic tasks, medical care, personal care (help with toileting, bathing, dressing, etc.), looking after siblings, ensuring safety, supporting communications, and managing finances. This can significantly impact on their health, wellbeing, and life outcomes. This Improvement Strategy has been developed to drive forward positive changes to support the improvement in outcomes for Highland's Young Carers.

UNCRC and Highland's Young Carers

Highland Council is committed to upholding the rights of all children and young people in ensuring they are protected from unfair treatment (discrimination, harassment and victimisation) under the Equality Act 2010 and that every child has the opportunity to grow up to maximise their full potential. The UNCRC underpins children and families' rights to be heard and given voices and opportunities to shape service design and delivery and is therefore particularly relevant to Highland's Young Carers.

Getting it Right for Highland's Young Carers

GIRFEC, as a strengths-based approach, seeks to realise children's rights on a day-to-day basis and is therefore underpinned by key values and principles. The Scottish Government National, Getting it Right for Young Carers Strategy 2010 – 2015, outlined some of the key improvements required for Young Carers in Scotland today. Getting it Right was refreshed in 2021 with the following principles:

- placing the child or young person and their family at the heart, and promoting choice, with full participation in decisions that affect them
- working together with families to enable a rights respecting, strengths based, inclusive approach
- understanding wellbeing as being about all areas of life including family, community, and society
- valuing difference and ensuring everyone is treated fairly
- considering and addressing inequalities
- providing support for children, young people, and families when they need it, until things get better, to help them to reach their full potential
- everyone working together in local areas and across Scotland to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Based on these principles, GIRFEC is about enhancing the wellbeing of all children and young people as well as building a flexible scaffold of support: where it is needed, for as long as it is needed.

The Highland Practice Model and the Child's Plan is integral to Getting it Right for Highland's Young Carers. The role of the named person or lead professional and the place of a young person-centred, co-ordinated Child's Plan is essential to ensuring the voice of the young carer is heard, rights are upheld and their needs are met.

Carers Act 2016

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into force on 1 April 2018. The Act provides new rights to carers in a number of areas. These 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 right to a Young Carer Statement to identify your needs and personal outcomes. (This is available to carers of all ages, no matter how many hours of care they provide and whether or not the person they care for provides care)
- 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
- a duty on the NHS to inform and involve you if the person you care for is discharged from hospital.

The Carers Charter [Carers' charter: Your rights as an adult carer or young carer in Scotland \(carersuk.org\)](http://Carers' charter: Your rights as an adult carer or young carer in Scotland (carersuk.org)) supports a broader understanding of

- Who is a young carer?
- What is a young carer statement?
- What rights do carers have to support, to meet their needs?
- Who is responsible for providing support?
- How can you be involved in services?

Highland's Young Carers Strategic Plan

Highland recognise that the needs of Young Carers can be complex and require a whole system approach to solutions.

In partnership with Young Carers, Highland Council has collaborated to provide direction to the shape of services and support for Young Carers in Highland, for the future.

This collaborative group which has emerged to drive forward the strategic improvement work for Young Carers has co-produced this strategy and plan. This group is known as The Highland Young Carers Improvement Group and includes members from each of the following organisations:

- Connecting Young Carers
- TYKES
- Caithness Klics
- Skye and Lochalsh Young Carers
- The Highland Council,
- High Life Highland

The Strategic Improvement Plan for Young Carers is focussed on achieving better outcomes for Young Carers, is led by their voices, choices and needs and will be data

measured. The plan will be led by the Highland Young Carers Improvement Group with governance and accountability routes to the Integrated Children's Service Board.

Highland's Principles for Young Carer

In Highland, we believe that to support our Young Carers, there must be common understanding of some key questions.

Who is a Young Carer?

It is clear from The Carers (Scotland) 2016 Act, that from a legislative perspective the terminology of Young Carers appears clearly defined. The nuance of the reality of who can be a young carer at any point, and for any duration in their childhood or adolescence is less clear.

In recognition of the national definition of a young carer, Highland Young Carers believe that:

1. Young Carers are children and young people under 18 years old who help to care for and support, both emotionally and practically, someone who has a physical disability or learning disability, is experiencing mental ill-health issues with substance misuse, or who has another long-term health condition. Most often Young Carers help to care for a parent, sibling or other loved one who lives with them. We also recognise those aged 16 to 25 in a caring role as Young Adult Carers.
2. The level of care a young carer provides can vary greatly, not all Young Carers are the primary carer, however it is still key they can be identified as a young carer and access support. The level of responsibility taken on as a carer is a big role for anyone, especially for a child. It is important to be mindful of the level of care the young carer provides, ensuring it does not become excessive or inappropriate for their age and stage.

Do Highland know all their Young Carers?

Whilst there are mechanisms for identifying who is a young carer (eg: SEEMIS in Education or the Childs Plan process), there needs to be consistency across all areas of Highland.

The challenge around this is not wholly system based. Rather it needs to be balanced with the young person's need or desire to step forward and be identified as a young carer. It is recognised that some Young Carers do not recognise their life is different to others around them. Some families' cultural beliefs of family values will lead them to think this is their duty, and just what you do for family. For others, there could be a level of embarrassment or stigma around the caring role and the reason for the needs of the cared for person. Often a caring role can be missed if the conditions the cared for person has are not obvious, causing others to assume they do not require support.

It is acknowledged however that Carers Trust found in their [research](#), there are 30,000 Young Carers under the age of 18 in Scotland, therefore there is likely to be considerably more unidentified Young Carers in Highland than we are currently aware of.

What is Highland's data?

Highland currently has 643 young people recorded on the education systems as Young Carers. Given the national data, proportionately this is low and therefore Highland is committed to awareness raising within education to support a climate and culture where Young Carers can come forward and self-identify.

Whilst education may have one system to identify Young Carers and have the role as named person through the GIRFEC approach, it is only one part of the whole system which could support potential Young Carers to self-identify and ensure that services and support are there for them when they need it. There are many other reasons a young carer can remain hidden, but these are the key ones found by staff in the young carer centres in Highland. It also highlights the need for professionals to be knowledgeable about Young Carers in school settings, social work, and other youth work settings. Having the early identification of a young carer can prevent poor outcomes for the child, ensuring they have support and a voice with their caring role to enable them to continue caring and succeeding in other aspects of their life such as school and socially.

Listening to the voices of Young Carers

Prior to the Covid 19 pandemic several pieces of improvement planning for Young Carers had been progressed. The pandemic, however, paused progression of this strategic planning. In re-establishing The Young Carers Strategic Improvement Group in 2021, work was progressed to engage with Young Carers all over Highland to seek their views about their experiences and aspirations.

In listening to the voices of Young Carers, consultations took place digitally and face to face with several groups in Highland.

The young carer core group was made up of 9 Young Carers who determined key themes for the project to explore further. These themes were then taken to 50 Young Carers, between the ages of 7 and 24 years. In addition to this, another number of Young Carers participated through adding comments to a digital feedback board.

Highland's Young Carers Strategic Improvement Plan

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Carers Charter will form the framework for Highlands Young Carers Strategic Plan.

Priority 1: Young Carers have a right to a Young Carer Statement

The Young Carer Statement (YCS) must be offered to all Young Carers. Some may choose to decline this offer. The statement must include the Young Carers personal outcomes and an assessment of their needs.

In Highland the Young Carer Statement is separate to the child's plan and is in an accessible digital format.

Young Carers with significant caring roles, however, who require a more detailed plan to support their needs and personal outcomes could be summarised in a Child's Plan. Where a young carer already has a Child's Plan to address other identified needs the statement could be included as part of the documentation to support the Child Plan process, as per Scottish Government legislation.

The Young Carer statement should be regularly reviewed to account for any changes in caring and family circumstances.

The statement will continue to be in effect until a young carer reaches 18 and has left school. When a young carer reaches 18 and intends to continue to provide care, they will be offered an Adult Carers Support Plan. The Young Carer statement (Child's Plan) should include

- information on the level and type of care provided
- the impacts of the caring responsibilities
- the extent to which the Young Carer is able and willing to provide care
- how far the nature and extent of the care provided is appropriate, based on discussion with the young person.
- What personal outcomes matter to have a life alongside caring and to improve their own health and wellbeing.
- Support available to the Young Carer locally.
- Any support which the Partners to the plan intend to provide.

Priority 2: Young Carers have a right to be involved in the hospital discharge process of the person they are or are going to be caring for.

Under The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 all Scottish local authorities are required to involve Young Carers in the discharge planning of the cared for person from hospital.

In Highland this can be critical due to the rurality and distances between health centres and hospitals. The impact on a child or young person having information, knowledge, and support for what to expect when the cared for person comes home will be vital for their own wellbeing and expectations.

Priority 3: Young Carers have a right to support to meet any eligible personal needs.

Currently there is no pathway to access Self Directed Support for Young Carers in Highland. Self-directed Support can help individuals choose how the support in their life is provided, making it a more personal package that's more suited to the family. Future consideration needs to be given to how resources and support is provided directly to ensure they can meet the needs of the young carer.

Priority 4: Young Carers have a right to be involved and consulted about the services for the person you care for.

Highlands Young Carers can often go "unseen" and "unheard" within our communities. In #Keeping The Promise, the UNCRC and Getting it Right for Highland's Young Carers, the voices and choices need to be central to all aspects of service delivery and support. This includes service improvements, potential changes to strategic and practice policies and procedures.

Working in partnership together, the Young Carers Improvement Group will work together, monitor and review on a regular basis the following objectives:

- 1) All Young Carers in Highland have a Young Carer Statement where the Young Carer indicates they would like one.
- 2) That educators supporting Young Carers have access to Education Scotland Modules for professional learning.
- 3) Continue to raise awareness to schools/colleges to support in the discovery of YCs and hidden YCs.
- 4) Promote the right of Young Carers with medical staff in local hospitals, medical centers and GP practices where Young Carers are involved in the hospital discharge process of the person they are or are going to be caring for.
- 5) That Young Carers have support to meet any eligible needs.
- 6) Continue to support pathway to accessing Self Directed Support (SDS) for YCs.
- 7) Work with local mental health charities to access mental health support for YCs.
- 8) Work with schools, colleges, and employers to educate the need for support to ensure the YC is not facing burn out due to their caring role and other responsibilities.
- 9) Support YCs to have easy access to grants and support to access a break from their caring role.
- 10) Support YCs have access to generic support and advice, locally. Groups, one to one, YC center respite trips and up to date information via all websites for YC centers, NHS Highland and THC.
- 11) Young Carers are involved and consulted about the services for the person they care for.

Appendix 5

Young Carers Statement A Guide for Children & Young People

Every young carer has a right to a Young Carer Statement that contains information about the carers' role and their own circumstances.

You can find more about the Young Carers Statement, package, support, and stories from Young Carers here: [Young Scot](#), Young Carers.

All Young Carers have a right to a 'young carer statement', however it is up to you to decide if you want one and who you share this with.

In Highland, schools are best placed to support the Young Carer Statement and you should ask your teacher who can help you find the right person to complete a statement. If you are not in school, you could ask a trusted adult or support worker.

Please use your Chromebook to complete your Young Carer Statement. You can use text, audio and pictures. You can also decide who you share your statement with, and it can be a digital version or it could be printed.

A template has been created using bookcreator.com and you can access this on any device once you have an account which is free.

Please use this [link](#) or the QR code. You will need to use your Highland Gmail address to create a Book Creator account (if you haven't got one already and then make a copy of the book. This is called 'remix' on the app. You can do this easily by visiting www.bookcreator.com



Steps to follow:

Visit www.bookcreator.com

Log in with your Highland Gmail address (if you are using Book Creator for the first time, you'll need to answer a few questions in order to create your account)

Use the link or QR code to access the Young Carers Statement master

Create a copy by clicking on remix - this is important as you can then set your own permissions for sharing

Book creator allows the text to be read and you can choose the voice in settings. If you need help, please ask your teacher or an adult in school.