

<b>Policy &amp; Procedure</b>	Student Carers Policy
<b>Policy Area</b>	Students
<b>Version Number</b>	01
<b>Approving Committee</b>	SMT
<b>Date of Approval</b>	03 February 2021
<b>Date of Equality Impact Assessment</b>	10 February 2021
<b>Date of Review</b>	03 February 2023
<b>Responsible Senior Manager</b>	Assistant Principal Student Life & Skills

## History of Amendments

Date	Version/Pages/Sections Affected	Summary of changes

### Policy Statement

West College Scotland aims to develop and maintain a learning environment of trust where individuals can work together effectively. The principles and values of this policy acknowledge that students have a right to feel their learning environment is safe, promotes equality, dignity and encourages individuals to treat each other with respect and trust.

West College Scotland College is committed to widening access and to providing equity of opportunity to all learners to help ensure that all students are supported to reach their full potential. We are therefore committed to supporting student carers and being as flexible as possible to assist at all stages of the learning journey.

### Equality Statement

The College is committed to providing equal opportunities to ensure its students, staff, customers and visitors are treated equally regardless of gender reassignment, race, religion or belief; disability; age; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; sexual orientation; sex.

Please note this document is available in other formats, to request another format please email [info@wcs.ac.uk](mailto:info@wcs.ac.uk)

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## **Student Carers Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

This policy covers advice and guidance to students who, at any point during their studies at West College Scotland College have unpaid caring responsibilities (including Young Carers).

1.1. West College Scotland College use the Carer's Trust definition of a Carer. Students who, at any point during their studies at West College Scotland College, "provide unpaid care for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support."

West College Scotland College have a role in advising and supporting students who already are, or who anticipate becoming carers, as well as providing the same advice and support to prospective students making enquiries.

1.2. This policy covers both prospective and current West College Scotland College students who have an unpaid caring responsibility as defined in 1.1.

1.3. Confirming student carer status is the responsibility of the student. Declaration of carer status can be made as part of our admissions process; at interview or enrolment; to the Personal Academic Tutor; or to any member of staff at any point during the student journey.

1.4. As carers exist in a variety of different situations, proof of status can come from many different sources. Some examples of what can be provided as evidence are listed below but this list is not exhaustive:

- Self-certification, in the form of a short statement, regarding the nature of the caring duties and how this may affect their studies, including how long they anticipate this will last
- GP letter confirming carer status
- A local authority Carer's Assessment, Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carers Statement
- Young Carer's Authorisation Card
- Other relevant documentation, for example a letter from a Carer's organisation, social worker, carer group, receipt of benefits

In most situations, self-certification will be the most common method used. However, at any point West College Scotland College may request more information or evidence to confirm carer status or any changes to the student caring responsibilities.

1.5. A student may take on caring responsibilities at any time during their learning journey and it is acknowledged that there may be unpredictability in terms of caring commitment and time scales. It is therefore recognised that the needs of each carer are unique and the support which an individual may require, will be variable.

1.6. This policy, and the related procedure, does not cover:

- Students with parental responsibilities, unless for a child with a disability
- Students working in a paid caring capacity

However, it should be noted that the College recognises that all students will have unique needs and we strive to anticipate and meet the needs of all students.

## **2. Compliance**

This policy must be complied with by all staff working in the college. Students who disclose they are student carers, in line with our definition as detailed in 1.1, and have confirmation of status, as detailed in 1.4, are entitled to have individualised support to help them to access courses and to reach their potential.

## **3. Student Carer's Personal Support Plan**

We recognise the challenges faced by students who have unpaid caring responsibilities. We want to be able to support their success at college and to take steps as appropriate to help in any way we can.

We rely on the student telling us about their own situation. This can be done at any time pre-application, on-application, on-enrolment or at another time. The staff member should inform the Student Advisory Services Team.

Every student identified as having caring responsibilities will have access to support from the [Student Advisory Services \(SAS\) Team](#) to establish a Student Carer Support Plan.

The Student Carer's Support Plan should be completed by the student, their SAS Named Contact and their Course Leader or Guidance Tutor. The student may want to invite others to assist in the formation of their plan (e.g. family member, Carers Advisor, Social Worker). A copy of the plan should be retained by: the student, SAS Named Contact and the Course Leader/Guidance Tutor. The plan will be kept under review and updated as appropriate. This is a sensitive document and must be held in secure location. On expiry, this document must be disposed of through secure waste.

#### **4. Monitoring**

Compliance with the policy and related procedure will be monitored and evaluated through regular audits with update reports to the Learning Teaching and Quality Committee; and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

The policy and related procedure will be monitored in relation to:

- The equality targets set for student carers detailed in the Access and Inclusion Strategy
- The results of focus groups and student surveys
- Feedback from external carer services

Appropriate procedures for monitoring and evaluation are the responsibility of the Lead Officer.

#### **5. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years and updated as necessary.

## Equality Impact Assessment

**Name of policy/procedure/decision:** Student Carers Policy

**Provide a brief summary of the aims of the policy/procedure/decision and main activities:**

This Policy provides advice and guidance for students who are unpaid carers.

**Assessed By:** Clare Fraser

**Date:** 10 Feb 2021

**This stage establishes whether a policy, procedure or decision will have a differential impact from an equality perspective on people who share protected characteristics or whether it is “equality neutral” (i.e. have no effect either positive or negative).**

**The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.**

**1. Who will benefit from this (students/staff/stakeholders)? Is there likely to be a positive impact on people who share protected characteristics, and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”? i.e. will not have a differential impact on any equality group/s?**

Nationally, there are more female than male unpaid carers. Lone parents are predominantly female. This Policy should advance equality for females. It is also relevant with regards to age and disability, as the incidence of ill health increases with age. This Policy will complement the College’s duty to take steps to meet the needs of people with a disability and to advance equality.

**2. Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people who share protected characteristics? If so, who may be affected and why? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”?**

It is not anticipated that this Policy will adversely impact people who share protected characteristics.

**3. What action will you take to ensure that you are monitoring the impact of this Procedure?**

Carer data is collected and monitored. Any complaints about policy implementation will also be analysed.