

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Gwella mynediad at gymorth i ofalwyr di-dâl](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on [Improving access to support for unpaid carers.](#)

UC29: Ymateb gan: Plant Yng Nghymru | Response from: Children in Wales



To – Health and Social Care Committee

Submitted by Children in Wales-Plant Yng Nghymru

Improving access to support for unpaid carers

Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to contribute comments to inform the Health and Social Care Committees inquiry into improving access to support for unpaid carers

In line with our organisations remit which focuses on the rights and wellbeing of babies, children and young people, our response is in respect of young carers¹. We have drawn on our current and previous work with young carers, including through our direct engagement with children and young people at the Young Carers Festival in August, as well as the professionals which provide direct support and services to them.

Young Carers

The Young Carers Festival² 2025 took place at the Royal Welsh Showground between August 19th – 21st. Funded by the Welsh Government, the festival is an opportunity for young carers to have respite and enjoy a break from their caring role and an opportunity to have fun, relax and make friends. Children in Wales, through our Young Wales participation programme, took the opportunity to engage with young carers to inform this response as part of our wider consultation work.

The following provides a summary of the main issues young carers wished to raise with us when we asked 'what were the main barriers they faced in accessing the support they need'.

¹ In Wales, there are known to be over 30,000 young carers/young adult carers under 25. There are likely to be more given the hidden nature of their caring role, with many missing out on an assessment and then eligibility for respite support (under the Social Services & Well-being Act)

² [Home - Wales Young Carers Festival](#) and [Annual festival "life changing" for young carer | GOV.WALES](#)

Transport

Being unable to access support and services, especially for those in rural areas due to transport barriers.

Being listened to

Not enough opportunities for adults to listen to Young Carers. More opportunities are needed for young people to have a voice, especially in adult settings

Schools

Lack of awareness, knowledge and understanding in schools of young carers needs and their important role in caring for relatives. There is a need for more understanding and promotion of their needs in school settings. There is also a need for more support being made available in schools and for this support to be more consistent and accessible.

Information & Awareness

Lack of awareness among young carers as to the support which is available. There is a need for more information and publicity on what support is available in an accessible format. Young carers valued being told about what support is available.

Health services

Some young carers are not identified as having caring responsibilities by health professionals

Public awareness

There is a need for greater public awareness of the role and contributions young carers make

Money

Financial barriers need greater recognition and response to support young carers living in low-income households

Despite the tremendous work being delivered by many of our members and partners in the third sector by providing information and support to young carers through national and locally commissioned services, many of the issues raised have been raised many times before by young carers.

Influencing work

Though our engagement as members of the Welsh Government Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers, we have taken the opportunity to highlight some of the barriers young carers face which informed the current Unpaid Carers Strategy and Delivery Plan. We have also made representation to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2023 in respect of the barriers and challenges many young carers in Wales face³.

We have previously supported young carers to have a platform to raise their issues directly, and a testimony of this work with one young carer has been documented here.⁴ In this blog, they raise

- Challenge of balancing caring duties and education throughout the entirety of their secondary school education
- Facing hurdles due to the lack of awareness about young carers not only in the community but nationwide
- Roll out of the young carer ID cards
- How carers allowance should be available to those young carers who are in education

Young Carers ID Cards

We support the policy intent for every young carer in Wales to be offered an ID card⁵ which can provide significant value and benefits in enabling better access to support, opportunities and services to help with their caring role. We believe there is a need for further publicity and a national awareness raising campaign directed at young carers and essential services to help increase take up of the ID card and extend the opportunities it brings. The Committee may wish to consider the progress which has been made to date and the steps needed to be taken by the Welsh Government, in partnership with local authorities, to address some of the challenges and barriers to full roll out. This will include the inconsistencies between the offer amongst local authorities and the resource allocated.

Designated support in schools and colleges

We have previously called for every school to have a designated teacher for young carers, recognising the importance placed by young carers of having a named person with sufficient awareness and understanding of

³ [Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group.pdf](#) (pp 46-47)

⁴ [Children in Wales | Life as a Young Carer](#) and [yc-guide---englishhr.pdf](#)

⁵ [Young carers' ID card launched on day of action | GOV.WALES](#)

their issues. This trusted adult should have sufficient capacity and knowledge of the external support which is available and delivered in the community by health, public and third sector service providers, including access to specialist wellbeing support and peer support services. They should also have a key function in supporting young carers with their attendance and access to support within the school, such as counselling services and entitlement to grants and other benefits, such as free school meals (if eligible), as well creating a shared understanding amongst school and college staff, pupils and student populations. This is to help achieve a whole school systems approach and contribute towards eliminating any stigma, as well as improve understanding of the impact of their caring responsibilities on their education and their often inability to engage in extracurricular opportunities, constrained by their caring role.⁶

We understand that the current policy is to be refreshed later this year and will be calling upon the Welsh Government to work with local education authorities to ensure that every school has a designated teacher. The Committee may wish to consider what the barriers are for preventing this being realised and what steps need to be taken to address this gap.

For further information on the work of **Children in Wales**, please see www.childreninwales.org.uk.

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⁶ phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/knowledge-directorate/research-and-evaluation/publications/closing-the-educational-engagement-gap-for-young-carers/