NORTH, WEST AND HEBRIDES
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Student Carers Policy

POL-NWH-006

Lead Officer (Post):	Head of Student Experience
Responsible Office/ Department:	Student Experience
Responsible Committee:	Learning, Teaching and Research
Review Officer (Post):	Student Services Manager
Date policy approved:	14.02.25
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	17.09.25
Date policy due for review:	17.09.28
UHI Single Policy / UHI NWH Policy:	UHI Single Policy
Public face / College internal facing only	Public Facing
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	26.8.19
Has a Data Privacy Impact Assessment been completed:	Data Protection Officer has approved that no DPIA is required

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request. Please contact the Governance and Policy Officer on 01463 279000.

Policy Summary

Overview	This policy has been created to provide information on the support student carers can expect to receive whilst a student at the University of the Highlands and Islands.
Purpose	The policy will provide a unified approach to student carers across the network and ensure parity of student experience.
Scope	The policy applies to all students enrolled at the University and its academic partners.
Consultation	The policy has been developed by a group of practitioners from across the network who are part of the university's Priority Groups Forum.
Implementation and Monitoring	Academic Partners are responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed in their local institution.
Risk Implications	This policy will reduce risk for partners by ensuring that best practice from across the partnership is being shared and followed.
Link with Strategy	This is a cross-partner resource and links to the below elements in the UHI strategy: Supportive, caring and personal (Who we are) Teaching, learning and student support (Our priorities)
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Yes
	Privacy Impact Assessment: No

1. Policy Statement

1.1 The University is a collegiate institution based on a partnership of 10 colleges, 2 research institutions, and over 50 learning centres spread across the Highlands and Islands, Argyll, Moray and Perthshire. It encompasses both Further and Higher Education, allowing a single point of access for post-school education and training.

1.2 This policy outlines the university and its academic partners' commitment to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for students with unpaid caring responsibilities and to enable them to successfully complete their course and undergo a worthwhile experience throughout their student journey.

2. Definitions

2.1 The University and its academic partners have adopted the Carers Trust Scotland definition of a carer which is 'anyone who cares, unpaid, for a family member or friend who due to illness, disability, frailty, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.'

3. Purpose

3.1 This policy provides information and guidance to staff and students on the support available to student carers. It will also ensure there is a unified response to the support needs of student carers across the University and its academic partners therefore ensuring equity of experience no matter where a student is located.

3.2 This policy covers both prospective and currently enrolled students at the University and its academic partners.

4. Scope

4.1 This is a tertiary policy and covers all students currently enrolled at the university or one of its academic partners.

4.2 To identify student carers, the below Metis reports can be used:

- ADM007 – this will identify students who have applied.
- ENR013 – this will identify students who have enrolled.

4.3 Staff members are asked to proactively contact enrolled students identified within the ENR013 report to raise awareness of support available. If an academic partner has a high number of disclosures, they may wish to send a blanket email to all disclosed students, however, please ensure you add addresses into the bcc field so students cannot see who else has disclosed. Students on school senior phase programmes will not be proactively contacted however support can still be provided, if they are identified during their studies.

4.4 If resource allows, staff may also wish to proactively contact those students who have disclosed at application using the ADM007.

Confirmation of student carer status is the responsibility of the student. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- During admissions process
- At interview
- Via the disclosure box on the enrolment form
- To the Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)

- Or, to any other staff member during the student journey. Staff can refer students, with their consent, to the local Student Services team via the 'refer student to support' button in the Student Support area of UHI Records. Staff will require the student's ID number to make the referral.

4.5 To implement support, evidence is required to confirm a student's carer status which can come in many different forms. Some examples of acceptable proof include, but are not limited to:

- A local authority's Carer's Assessment, Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carers Statement
- Self-certification, in the form of a short statement, regarding the nature of caring duties and the impact these may have on studies. This can be verbal or written.
- A GP letter confirming status.
- Other relevant documentation such as a letter from a Carer's organisation, social worker, carer group or receipt from benefits.

4.6 Generally, self-certification will be the most common method used however the university can, at any point, request further information or evidence to confirm carer status or any changes to the student caring responsibilities.

5. Exceptions

5.1 This policy does not cover:

- Students with parental/guardian responsibilities (unless for a child with a disability)
- Those employed in a caring capacity

6. Notification

6.1 All staff have the potential to encounter students who are unpaid carers and should be aware of this policy.

6.2 This policy will be highlighted to Senior Management, Student Support Staff and all other members of staff via relevant committees and staff newsletters. Students will be informed via the appropriate communication channels.

6.3 The policy will be publicly available on the University/academic partner's website, along with other current policies. It can be viewed here.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 It is the responsibility of all university and academic partner staff to comply with the policy.

7.2 Students who disclose their carer status will be offered the opportunity to discuss their support requirements with the local Student Services team which may lead to the development of a support plan detailing the reasonable adjustments which are required.

7.3 Examples of the reasonable adjustments which may be put in place for student carers include, but are not limited to:

- Authorised absence
- Assessment/essay extensions
- Timekeeping and timetable adjustments
- Access to part-time study
- Priority access to discretionary funding (formal evidence may be required of carer status.

With the student's permission, information on reasonable adjustments may be shared with Personal Academic Tutors (PATs) and teaching staff.

7.4 Students can request a meeting with their local Student Services team at any point during their studies, however, a review of their support plan is generally done once a year, unless there are any considerable changes in their caring responsibilities. Students are encouraged to advise their local student services team as soon as possible of any changes which may impact their studies.

7.5 Student Support staff will signpost to additional support available from external agencies, as required. This may include agencies such as Connecting Carers, Cross Roads or Connecting Young Carers, but will depend upon the geographical location.

7.6 The University will make every effort to accommodate the support needs of student carers however any flexibility must not impact on the student's ability to meet the necessary academic outcomes. All requests for reasonable adjustments will be carefully considered before being approved. If any request is rejected, the student will be made aware in writing which will include the reason for the rejection and guidance on what alternative arrangements can be made.

8 Legislative Framework

8.1 The below legislative is relevant to this policy:

- The Equality Act (2010)
- Carers (Scotland) Act (2016)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018)
- The Data Protection Act (1998)
- Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024

8.2 The policy should also be understood in conjunction with other policies and documentation such as:

- Learner Support policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness Policy
- Student Carers Action Plan
- Academic Partner Access and Inclusion Strategies

9 Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

Admissions Policy (Higher Education) – an applicant with caring responsibilities is recognised within the University's Admissions Policy. Applicants can highlight they are a carer within their personal statement or at any point during their student journey.

Student Carers Online Staff Module – Held within the University's BrightSpace platform, key Student Support and student facing staff are encouraged to complete this module.

10 Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0	18/11/19	FGPC	Approved	L Sutherland
1	25/04/22	Policy Owner	Reviewed – no changes required	L Sutherland
2	29/04/22	Policy Manager	Moved to new template	N Oakley
3	14/02/25	Senior Executive Team	Review Update to number of academic partners. Text added re Senior Phase students. Text added re sharing of reasonable adjustments with academic staff. Addition of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 under legislative duties.	L Sutherland