

Carer Passport



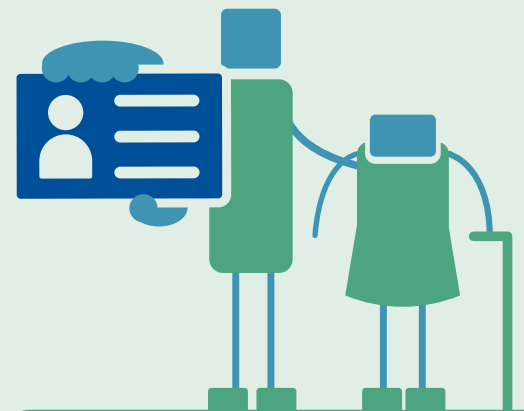
Funded by



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Your guide

The new Carer Passport
in colleges and universities



This Carer Passport Guide has been created by:

[carerpassport.uk/
education/colleges-universities](https://carerpassport.uk/education/colleges-universities)

 **carersUK**
making life better for carers

 **carerstrust**
action · help · advice

About this guide

The aim of this toolkit is to provide you with the know-how, insight and expertise to build your own Carer Passport scheme in colleges and universities – to provide a clear offer to carers, as well as links to advice and information and provide a mechanism to improve identification and support.

There is a clear recognition that Carer Passport schemes are often owned and developed locally, or by an employer, to suit their needs. We use the experience and knowledge from key leaders who have developed a Carer Passport locally as well as the experience of carers to provide all the insight and content needed to get a scheme going.

The work is being carried out by Carers UK and Carers Trust with funding from the Department of Health and Social Care with the aim of increasing the number of Carer Passport schemes in England which seek to support carers. It is part of our broader work and drive to build Carer Friendly Communities.

What benefits can a Carer Passport bring?

Experience locally shows that a Carer Passport schemes can:

- Aid identification and support of carers.
- Raise awareness of caring.
- Provide a concrete, easily understandable offer of support.
- Provide a mechanism that makes carers feel valued.
- Provide help/assistance to managers or key professionals.
- Provide a short-cut to knowing what support is needed, without having to ask lots of questions.
- Help in local discussions and support.

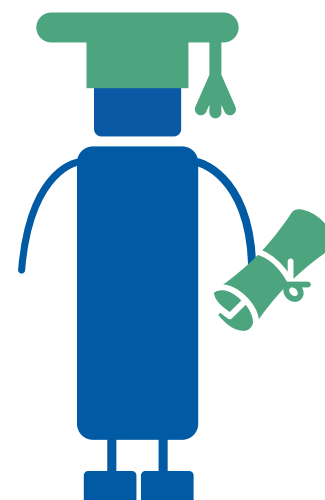
Where are Carer Passports currently used?

- Employers use a Carer Passport to support carers in the workplace.
- Hospitals use a Carer Passport and similar schemes to identify, recognise and support carers on specific wards or across the whole hospital.
- In a local community a Carer Passport scheme looks at a whole range of support and information as well as discounts for local services. They are often a popular way of engaging with carers who might not otherwise ask for help.
- Schools, colleges and universities have a Carer Passport to support pupils and students who might need additional information and advice or adjustments because of their caring responsibilities.

Carer Passport guide:

Colleges and universities

Key facts about carers	4
What is a Carer Passport in a college or university?	5
What examples are there?	7
What difference does it make?	10
Introducing a Carer Passport in colleges and universities	12
Going ahead	18
Appendix	20



Colleges and universities

Key facts about carers

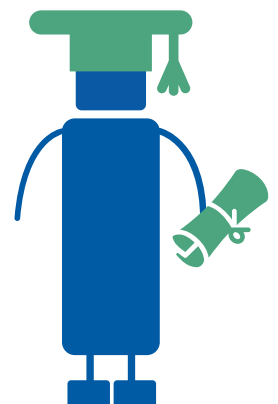


Who is a carer?

- A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.
 - A young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol.
 - Young adult carers are young people aged 16–25 who care, unpaid, for a family member or friend with an illness or disability, mental health condition or an addiction.
-
- Students with caring responsibilities are included in the **National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education** in relation to making more flexible and accessible provision for learners from under-represented groups.
 - There are more than 375,000 known young adult carers in the UK aged 16–25, who are providing support and assistance to their families and friends.
 - **National Union of Students (NUS) Research¹** shows a lack of co-ordinated, systematic support for student carers. The study revealed that only 36% of student carers felt able to balance their commitments, compared with 53% of students who did not have caring responsibilities.
 - **Carers Trust Research²** has found that young adult carers were four times more likely to drop out of college or university than students who were not young adult carers.
 - From 2018 UCAS will be providing the opportunity for students to identify themselves as **carers on UCAS applications**.³
 - The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) recognises carers as an **OFFA-countable target group** and encourages universities to consider the services they provide to support carers and how these might align with or be strengthened through Access Agreements.⁴

x4

Research shows that young adult carers are four times more likely to drop out of college or university than students without caring responsibilities.



1 Learning with Care, Experiences of student carers in the UK, NUS, 2013

2 Time to be Heard: A Call for Recognition and Support for Young Adult Carers, Carers Trust, 2014

3 This will be introduced in June 2018, initially for postgraduate students. In due course, this functionality will also be available for undergraduate applicants.

4 The duties and functions of HEFCE and OFFA will transfer to the Office for Students (OfS) on 1 April 2018.



What is a Carer Passport in a college or university?

Identification and recognition

A Carer Passport in a college or university is a simple tool to help coordinate and connect up the support for student carers through an 'organisation-wide' approach.

It supports the early identification of students who are carers and improves staff understanding of their personal circumstances and individual needs. Once a student is identified, a Passport will trigger an 'offer' of a range of personalised support. A Carer Passport should reflect the specific needs and circumstances of all student carers – both young adult carers and mature students with caring responsibilities.

The visible form of a Carer Passport may be a card, wallet, badge or perhaps a sticker within a student's handbook. Linked to this will be information held by a college or university about the student and how caring impacts on their learning, the additional support they need and monitoring information on their attainment and attendance.

The role of a Carer Passport in colleges and universities

Improves identification of student carers

A Carer Passport will improve the identification of student carers and the understanding that staff have of the circumstances and individual learning needs of student carers.

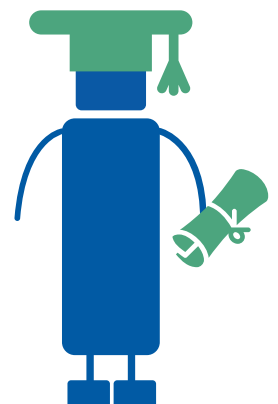
Sets out an offer of personalised support

A Carer Passport will also trigger an assessment of a student's learning needs that should feed into a clearly documented personal learning plan and include flexibility with assignments and perhaps more flexible and extended opportunities for support from a Personal Tutor.

A Carer Passport will trigger targeted information being given to a student about further support for themselves as carers and their families, including information about how to receive a Young Carers Needs Assessment under the Children and Families Act 2014, or a Young Carers Assessment (Transition



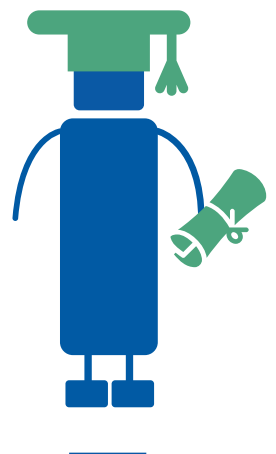
A Carer Passport should also be a gateway for student carers to access emotional support from pastoral staff, through counselling, or through peer support.



Assessment), or Carer's Assessment under the Care Act 2014, depending on the age of the child, young person or young adult.

Carer Passports can support student carers in a number of creative ways. These could include flexibility with entry requirements and priority with car parking arrangements and accommodation to help save student carers time. A Carer Passport might also be the gateway for priority and flexible access to study skills support, counselling services, having a mentor and equipment to support their studies.

A Carer Passport can also support student carers financially by providing information on benefits that they may be entitled to as a carer and enabling them to access funds, bursaries or scholarships available to students and which are also specific to student carers. A Carer Passport could also act as a discount card for student carers on a university or college campus and give reduced rates for college or university activities.





What examples are there?

Support for student carers in colleges and universities in England is growing. Although these developments are inconsistent and do not currently constitute a comprehensive Carer Passport, there is good practice taking place. The following practice examples could be brought together by colleges and universities and incorporated into a Carer Passport scheme.

York City card

A Young Carers Card initiated by York Carers Centre and the Youth Council in the City of York operates in schools and colleges across the city. At enrolment, students are able to tick a box on an induction form to identify themselves as a young adult carer. This is then flagged on the York College system for staff to see. Support teams are then able to contact them and issue the card which provides them with a range of dispensations such as 'Time-Out' of a class and being able to phone the person they care for. Student carers are offered pastoral support, free access to a confidential counselling service and practical support as needed.

Financial support at York College

The College has a strong focus on supporting carers, recognising that they often need additional financial support in order to attend and succeed on their chosen course. College policies have been updated to formally recognise student carers as a priority group and ensure that student carers have an explicit entitlement to funding.

The Funding Team are able to allocate an enhanced bursary package of full travel funding, meal vouchers and full funding for equipment costs to student carers, even if their household income is above the standard threshold. A flexible approach means that additional, individual needs can be met as they arise, such as funding a more expensive form of transport if a student needs to get somewhere quickly in an emergency.

A separate card scheme is run by York Carers Centre that local businesses are signed up to and which provides all carers with a range of discounts across the City. A separate emergency carers card also provides support in an emergency, such as a carer being involved in an accident.



Liverpool John Moores University

Liverpool John Moores University offers young carers opportunities to visit the University and to get in touch with the dedicated member of staff for Young Adult Carers within student advice and wellbeing services before they apply.

When students arrive, the University works with them to develop a personalised package of support which is reviewed when appropriate to reflect in personal circumstances. Student carers are provided with support applying for student funding, advocacy with academic issues and staff act as a link between students, the University and external support agencies. In particular, the University is working in partnership with Liverpool City Council and Barnardo's Action with Young Carers Service to ensure that carers receive a full assessment of their individual needs by appropriate agencies.

The University of Salford

The University of Salford has well-developed links with local carer centres and a dedicated website that sets out how it supports student carers. A specific policy for students with caring responsibilities has been developed which indicates how students can be supported through counselling and financial support and the procedures to be followed in case of personal mitigating circumstances and interruption of studies.

Students can register themselves as a carer. There is a designated Student Life Carer Coordinator who will set up an individual Carer Support Plan with students. This can provide flexibility in relation to assignment deadlines, contact with tutors and with attendance. Students can support each other through an online Carers Forum.

The University of Winchester

The University of Winchester's Compact Scheme with local colleges and sixth forms, specifically includes student carers, and provides them with special consideration at application stage. Outreach activities include residential events and taster days that are aimed at young carers to increase their aspirations of further education and are run in partnership with local young adult carer services. Student carers are a targeted recruitment group for the Student Ambassadors Scheme, which provides them with opportunities to act as role models to other student carers and earn some money.

A named contact in Student Services for young adult carers signposts students to other University services and external



agencies. Student carers up to 25 years are able to access a £500 annual bursary and can join a 'Student Parents and Carers Group' which provides opportunities to find mutual support.

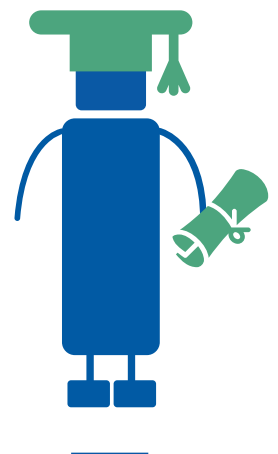
As an acknowledged priority group in the University Access Agreement, student carers can access a number of progression initiatives including an employability fund to support them financially with internships and work experience, driving lessons and a test and resitting core GCSE subjects.

De Montfort University Leicester

De Montfort University Leicester has a dedicated webpage that provides student carers with key contacts and information about the support they can access within and outside of the university. The University has designated staff for student carers and provides students with an electronic information booklet to connect with local and national support.

Sheffield Hallam University

At Sheffield Hallam University, support for students with caring responsibilities is promoted through a dedicated webpage and film. This includes financial support through a Carers Emergency Travel fund for small grants towards the cost of travelling home at short notice or in an emergency to provide care.





What difference does it make?

To carers?

"I would hope that a Carer Passport would ensure that I could expect additional understanding and flexibility throughout the duration of my study, without me having to provide additional detail at the time when I am asking for help, which by default will be when I am already struggling to juggle the demands of studying and my caring responsibilities."

– Student carer

"Student Services at Winchester have been amazing! Since being recognised as a young adult carer, I have had support with amending deadlines when needed. I also have access to bursaries, counselling and other welfare support that they offer, if I need it."

– Student carer

To college or university staff?

"We already provide bespoke support for student carers however most awareness of their needs sits within Student Services and Widening Participation. A Passport will help the whole institution to better identify, understand and support student carers, particularly staff in teaching roles."

– University staff

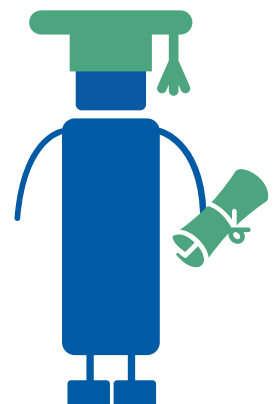
To the college or university as a whole?

"When we work to remove the barriers to education that student carers face (for example through our enhanced bursary package), carers are able to stay on, be successful and achieve. Research into our carers population at college has shown that student carers are more likely to attend and achieve if they are registered with their local carers centre and teaching staff are aware of their caring responsibilities, making identifying and supporting student carers a top priority!"

– College Student Advisor in Welfare and Funding

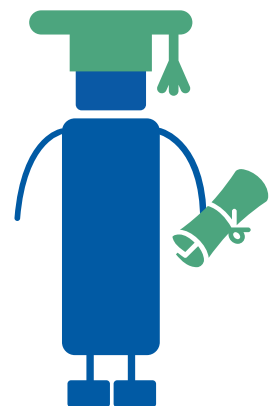
"A Carer Passport will help bring together all the different support into one place. It will certainly assist in identifying students with caring responsibilities and will bring clarity to students and staff about support carers can expect from the university and help students access that support at the point that they need to"

– University staff



“The Carer Passport offers an opportunity for students to be easily identified, or to identify themselves, and to ensure that they are aware of all the additional opportunities and support that may be available to them. It can remove the stigma of having to come forward to be ‘assessed’, and instead brings with it the expectation of having a right to an inclusive learning experience.”

– University staff





Introducing a Carer Passport scheme in colleges and universities

The benefits and business case

Students know what to expect

A Carer Passport will be of huge benefit even before students arrive at college or university. In fact, knowing that a college or university operates a Passport scheme and seeing clearly what support will be offered to them, might well make all the difference to students in deciding whether or not they can go on to study in the first place.

Many student carers will make compromises because of their caring responsibilities about where to study, which course to do and whether to study part time. Where a college or university runs a Carer Passport scheme, this is likely therefore to influence their decisions.

Identification and accessing support

A Carer Passport scheme will encourage students to self-identify as carers and staff will subsequently be able to identify holders of a Passport as student carers. Students will not have to keep explaining their circumstances to staff and knowing what support to expect and how to access it, they will feel more able to request support when they require it.

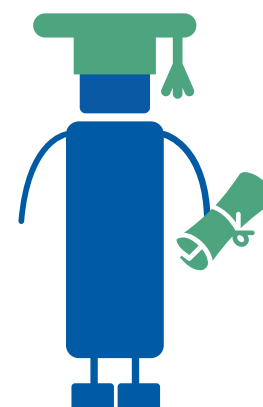
Student carers need particular recognition and support

Student carers can have specific needs and face unique challenges in order to succeed at college or university. A Carer Passport has the potential to trigger and ensure that students know about, vital support within and outside of the college or university that could make the difference between remaining and succeeding on their course and dropping out.

Support student carers health and wellbeing

Student Carers face additional pressures on their time and on their finances and research⁴ has found that many student carers report experiencing poor mental health. Staff may not always be aware of these added pressures. Having a Passport will not only help identify students to staff who may then make

⁴ Sempik, J and Becker, S (2014a) Young Adult Carers at College and University (Carers Trust)



adjustments for them if they are struggling, but will help facilitate and expedite targeted support for a student to help protect their health and wellbeing. A Carer Passport that provides concessions for sports and leisure activities would help student carers access these and also support the health and wellbeing of students.

Support with finances and leisure and social activities

A Carer Passport can be a gateway for targeted bursaries and funds for student carers as in Sheffield and Winchester and could be used to offer discounts or concessions for carers that would support their education. Support with finances triggered by a Carer Passport would help students with additional travel expenses and help them take part in extra-curricular activities and social activities which can be difficult for student carers financially. Where Carer Passport schemes facilitate student carers meeting up with each other, socialisation and mutual support for carers would also be improved. Sheffield Hallam University for example have set up a Facebook group where students can connect with other carers.

Benefits for colleges and universities

There are likely to be significant numbers of students with caring responsibilities within a college or university and therefore supporting these students makes sense. Moreover, having a clear and well communicated Carer Passport scheme is likely to attract more students to a particular college or university. A scheme will help strengthen provision to student carers, support equality and diversity and improve the understanding that colleges and universities have of the specific needs of student carers. This will help ensure that each student carer is given the best possible chance of successfully completing their course and support attainment and retention rates.

Carer Passport schemes will assist colleges and universities to cooperate with local authorities and contribute to support plans for young adult carers that arise out of Transition Assessments under the Care Act 2014. A Passport could also act as a trigger for assisting colleges and universities – perhaps in partnership with a local carer service – to ensure that Young Adult Carers and those they are caring for receive a full assessment of their individual needs.



Elements of success

Organisation wide approach

A Carer Passport scheme will be most effective where it is coordinated by a designated staff member or team who have oversight of the full range of support available for student carers. It is important that a college or university-wide approach is developed and teams work closely together. At the University of Winchester for example, The Widening Participation team connect student carers to Student Services and Student Services connect students to the Bursary scheme as well as the Student Ambassador Scheme run by the Widening Participation Team. From 2019 universities will be aware of student carers who have disclosed this through the application process. This information should be used to inform appropriate staff and trigger communication to students about the Carer Passport..

Collaborative working

A Carer Passport scheme can be enhanced by strong partnership working between the University, its Student Union, the local authority, health services, carer services and other local services. Liverpool John Moores University for example is working in partnership with Liverpool City Council and Barnardos' Action with Young Carers Service, to ensure that young adult carers and those they are caring for receive a full assessment of their individual needs by appropriate agencies. A local carer service or young adult carer service can bring a wealth of expertise and add capacity to supporting student carers, and a Carer Passport can act as a gateway for students to access wider support.

Information for students

A Passport can facilitate a conversation between Student Services and student carers which should trigger the provision of essential information that is needed by carers. Information would include how students can request an assessment of their needs and how to access additional support for them and their families. This conversation and information for students may be best delivered in partnership with a specialist carer service..

Saving time for student carers

Student carers can be particularly time-pressured due to their caring role and the additional travel that comes with that. Supporting student carers therefore with time saving



initiatives can be particularly helpful. Even small changes such as providing more flexibility with returning books to the library can help relieve the pressure for students. Moreover, where a Passport gives priority or flexibility with parking, professional placements and accommodation for example, this could make a significant difference. Many carers will commute rather than live on campus, so access to commuter lounges and benefits can help.

Potential challenges and how to overcome them

Organisational-wide awareness

One of the biggest challenges for a college or university in developing and implementing a successful Carer Passport will be organisationwide awareness and accurate understanding of the scheme. There will be key staff such as Student Support Advisors and Tutors for whom it is vital to be aware of and understand the Carer Passport. A scheme however will work most effectively where as many staff as possible are aware of the scheme and can inform students about it.

In a busy environment such as a college or university there will be numerous support initiatives for different student groups. Ensuring therefore that the key messages about the scheme are promoted effectively will be important to ensure that staff understand clearly who the scheme is for, what the main benefits are for students, and how the scheme is accessed.

Promotion and communication to students

Ensuring that all students are aware of and have clarity about the scheme and how to access it will be key. Promotion of a Carer Passport needs to be proactive especially when students first arrive.

However during the first few weeks at college or university students will be faced with huge amounts of new information and they will likely be prioritising meeting others and establishing a peer group. Moreover, some students will only become carers or identify themselves as carers at a later point in their studies. Promotion of a scheme therefore should be ongoing and extend beyond enrolment, freshers' fayres and inductions. Students may be reluctant to self-identify as carers, so it is important to emphasise the benefits and the confidential nature of the scheme.

Universities and colleges with mature students should ensure that a Carer Passport meets the needs of student carers of all ages and circumstances and that promotion of the scheme makes this clear.



Criteria for a Carer Passport and wider interventions

Colleges and universities may be unsure of what criteria to use for a Carer Passport and for any targeted support for students such as eligibility for a bursary. They may also struggle with how they verify whether a student meets the criteria, and may be concerned that students might try and access a Carer Passport illegitimately.

Many student carers will not have had a formal assessment as a carer from their local authority. However this should not indicate that they are not a carer. Colleges and universities should therefore be flexible with what they require as proof of being a carer. They may wish to accept a variety of evidence such as a reference or letter from a GP, or from a carer service that has previously supported the student.

Promoting the Carer Passport in colleges and universities

Promotion of a Carer Passport scheme across a large college or university can be challenging. However, since a student might mention something that could trigger their identification as a carer at any point, it is vital that as many staff as possible are made aware of the Passport through communications, staff training and induction.

Several universities, including The University of Salford and De Montfort University, have established a dedicated webpage for student carers that sets out key contacts for students and the support available. The University of Manchester Students' Union has developed an information e-booklet for student carers and Sheffield Hallam University has created a short film to promote its support for student carers.

Some students base their choice of university on their understanding of the support that will be available to them as student carers. Promoting a Passport before students arrive through widening participation activities in secondary schools, in college or university promotional literature and communications would therefore be productive. Promoting a scheme on websites where students will be visiting whilst applying to college or university, through carer organisations and on local authority websites, will help encourage students and give them confidence that with support, studying is a viable option for them.

Students applying to university from 2018 will have the opportunity to state that they are a carer and so universities will be in a better position to target new student carers. Making new students aware of the Carer Passport at enrolment, through course inductions,

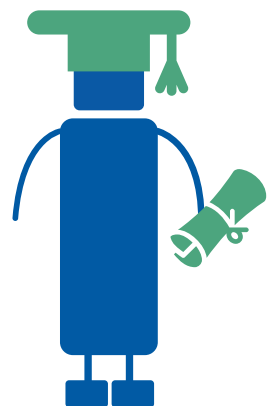


registration and at freshers' fayres would be valuable, perhaps with by providing students with a welcome pack for carers.

It is important that not only key staff such as Personal Tutors are aware of the Carer Passport scheme, but also staff in general. This increases the chances of student carers being informed about and connected to a scheme.

Posters and awareness days

Promotion through intranet announcements and posters placed strategically in canteens, counselling areas, student unions and GP surgeries are useful for drawing the attention of students to a Passport scheme. Dedicated awareness days including Young Carers Awareness Day, Carers Week, Carers Rights Day and other more generic student wellbeing events provide ideal opportunities for highlighting a Carer Passport to both students and staff.





Going ahead

- Be informed by the expertise and insights of students who are known to be student carers and work with them to develop and promote the scheme.
- Undertake an audit of existing support for student carers in your college or university and consider how other support might be linked into to a Carer Passport offer.
- Gain senior management backing for the Carer Passport and establish a lead member of staff to coordinate the scheme. Include the Carer Passport in policies.
- Develop and promote a 'Commitment to Student Carers' as detailed in the Carers Trust University toolkit
- Establish a way of identifying student carers on the student record and on their student ID card, so staff can immediately see which students are carers.
- Try to establish a consistent approach for the Carer Passport with further education colleges in your area and other universities.
- Work in collaboration with local carer services.
- Develop a clear and simple mechanism for applying for a Carer Passport.
- Promote clearly the purpose of a Carer Passport, what it offers students. Develop clear guidelines and communicate clearly which students can access the Passport.
- Establish a procedure for review and renewal of the Carer Passport.
- Establish procedures for recording and monitoring usage of the Carer Passport, measuring outcomes and evaluating the impact of the initiative.
- Access the Carer Passport templates and examples of good practice which are available, and which can be adapted by schools and carer services.
- Promote how you support student carers on a dedicated webpage. Include essential information for student carers and key contacts.
- Establish a bursary, scholarship or fund that student carers can access for example purchase essential equipment or to support travel and accessing extra-curricular activities.



Universities

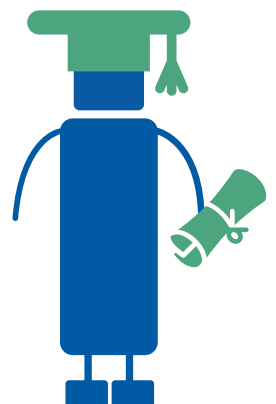
- Ensure student carers are included in your university Access Agreement and Compact Schemes.
- Ensure admissions (UCAS) information about which students are carers is disseminated appropriately to staff and linked to the Carer Passport scheme, when this becomes available from UCAS.

In conclusion

A Carer Passport within a college or university setting can be a useful tool to promote the safety of its students, engagement with carers and development of a truly inclusive community.

Each college or university can, in partnership with carers, plan and execute their Passports with creativity to meet the needs of their students. A Carer Passport scheme can be an opportunity for colleges and universities to integrate the work they do with carers into their everyday practices and seeks better outcomes for young adult carers and their families.

If you would like to view templates, good practice examples and get some ideas about developing your own Carers Passport, go to www.carerpassport.uk





Appendix

What might a Carer Passport offer?

Resources and templates

- >>> Leaflet to explain the scheme
- >>> Poster to promote the scheme
- >>> Application form
- >>> ID card template
- >>> Checklist of things to consider when implementing
- >>> Going Ahead summary

External resources and examples

- >>> Salford University – Policy document
- >>> University of Winchester – Bursary Application Form
- >>> York – Young Carers Card
- >>> York – Young Carers Card Application Form

Other resources

Phelps, D and Warren, S (2015), Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities: Ideas and Practice for Universities to Help Student Carers Access and Succeed in Higher Education England version (Carers Trust).

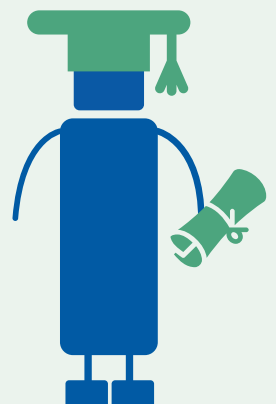
https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/university_toolkit_master_webversio%20n_final.pdf

Phelps, D, Aylward, N, Robey, C (2015), Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities: A Resource for Colleges and Services to Help Young Adult Carers Succeed in Further Education (Carers Trust and NIACE).

https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/university_toolkit_master_webversio%20n_final.pdf

Know Your Rights: Support for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers in England for more information about getting an assessment.

<https://carers.org/know-your-rights-support-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers-england>



The University of Oxford's Compass Programme Toolkit including interactive activities, quizzes, lesson plans, information and links
<http://www.compasstoolkit.ox.ac.uk/>

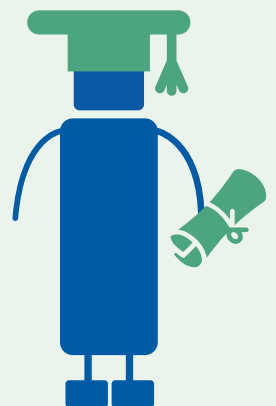
NUS (2013), Learning with Care, Experiences of Student Carers in the UK (NUS).
<https://www.nus.org.uk/global/campaigns/learning%2520with%2520care%2520-%2520nus%2520research%2520report.pdf>

Sempik, J and Becker, S (2014a) Young Adult Carers at College and University (Carers Trust).
https://carers.org/sites/files/carerstrust/young_adult_carers_at_college_and_universit%20y.pdf

The Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning (RUBLE):
This resource by Learning and Work Institute was developed specifically for young adult carers.
<http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/our-work/life-and-society/citizens-curriculum/young-adult-carers/>

This website by Learning and Work Institute brings together a range of information, research and resources which will help you support young adult carers into learning and work.
<http://learnworkcare.org.uk/>

Initiatives supporting young adult carers at universities (Carers Trust Website)
<https://professionals.carers.org/universities-supporting-students-caring-responsibilities>





Find out more and access resources at:

[carerpassport.uk](https://www.carerpassport.uk)