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Young Carer Grant: interim evaluation



EQUALITY AND WELFARE



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Executive Summary

Background

The Scottish Government has an overall aim that carers are supported on a consistent basis to allow them to continue caring, if that is their wish, in good health and wellbeing, allowing for a life of their own outside of caring. Social Security delivers one aspect of this overall government approach to supporting carers, including through the provision of Young Carer Grant.

Announced by the First Minister in 2017 as part of a package of support for young carers, it is a one off payment (£308.15 in 2021/22), which can be applied for annually, for young carers aged 16, 17 or 18 with caring responsibilities. It was launched in October 2019.

The overall aims of Young Carer Grant are to:

- help young carers improve their own quality of life by taking part in opportunities which are the norm for their non-caring peers
- provide some recognition of their unpaid caring role

This interim evaluation aims to provide learning about the overall implementation of the benefit over the first 18 months of delivery, and the extent to which the short and medium-term policy objectives of Young Carer Grant have been met. In doing so, it can also assess the likely contribution of Young Carer Grant to longer-term government outcomes for carers which take account of wider Scottish Government interventions outside of social security which are also designed to support carers.

The findings will provide groundwork for policy improvement and feed into the development for the full evaluation of Young Carer Grant scheduled for 2023/2024.

Methods

The interim evaluation contained three strands: analysis of management data, an overview of Social Security Scotland Client Survey findings (referred to as the “Client Survey” for the remainder of the report), and commissioned qualitative research with young carers, and stakeholders that work with them.

Delivery of Young Carer Grant

Young carers involved in the Client Survey and the commissioned research generally found the application process to be easy and straightforward. Young carers typically applied online and found this to be convenient and accessible. However, stakeholders indicated that difficulties with the application process could be a barrier to many other young carers, specifically those living in chaotic households where it is difficult for them to find the information they need in order to apply.

The commissioned research explored other barriers to applying for Young Carer Grant. Young carers and stakeholders identified a lack of awareness of the grant as

a major barrier to those eligible to apply and the reluctance of young carers to take up the grant due to how they perceived themselves and their caring role. Stakeholders highlighted that a lack of consent from parents or the cared-for person could be a barrier.

Commissioned research also explored the impact of the requirement that only one young carer can receive the grant in respect of any one cared-for person, referred to as the 'one carer rule'. Although none of the participants had missed out on the grant due to this rule, they raised concerns that it could be unfair to carers who may still have a demanding care role, despite sharing responsibility with another young carer. There was also concern among stakeholders that the eligibility criteria for receiving the benefit were excluding too many young carers with significant caring responsibilities.

Overwhelmingly, young carers participating in the Client Survey felt that they had been treated with fairness, dignity and respect and had had a positive experience of Social Security Scotland.

Use of Young Carer Grant

Young carers that participated in the commissioned research used the grant in a wide range of ways and in very much the same ways as teenagers in general tend to spend their money: on clothes, socialising with friends, putting it into savings (for driving lessons, for example), on electronic devices, on hobbies and on presents for family. More exceptionally, they spent it on rent or food.

Impact of Young Carer Grant

Commissioned research indicated that Young Carer Grant had a positive impact on young carers' ability to take part in opportunities that are the norm for their non-caring peers. If they had not received the grant, participants generally indicated that they would have had to go without all or some of the things they purchased and missed out on the activities they had been able to take part in.

There was also evidence of the grant helping to increase young carers' sense of choice and control over their lives. Most immediately, participants in the commissioned research were generally clear that it was up to them how they spent the grant, and that, in the absence of the grant, they would have had to go without all or some of the things they purchased. More broadly, there was also evidence of it increasing young carers' sense of control over their lives, by making them feel more independent, more confident, less anxious and getting better at saving. Participants of the Client Survey also felt that the grant had "helped to control finances" "helped to pay for what was needed".

The majority of respondents to the Client Survey generally felt that social security payments had helped make a difference to their lives and almost all participants involved in the commissioned research reported that Young Carer Grant had made a positive (albeit not necessarily a very large) impact on their mental wellbeing, mainly by reducing stress and increasing confidence.

The impact on young carers' physical health was somewhat limited but there were examples of participants spending some of their grant on things that would benefit it - such as exercise equipment, gym membership and dance classes.

More indirectly, stakeholders participating in the commissioned research felt that the grant had the potential to open up access to other support (by encouraging people to find out if they were young carers; through sign-posting applicants to other services; and by encouraging applications for other support in the future).

However, there is a limit to what a financial payment can do and the grant had no direct impact on some of the negative aspects of being a young carer that were most commonly mentioned by participants in the commissioned research. This included a lack of time to relax, do their own thing and spend time with friends, as well as anxieties about the health of their cared for person.

Young carers participating in the commissioned research had mixed views on whether receiving the grant had helped them feel more recognised. Some felt that it had made no difference but, more commonly, young carers did feel that it had helped at least a little. There was a sense in which both the introduction and existence of the grant, and the fact that they had been deemed eligible to receive it, provided recognition and validation.

Conclusions and implications

The evaluation findings suggest that Young Carer Grant was welcomed and viewed broadly positively by applicants, recipients and stakeholders. As outlined, it also appears to be meeting its overall aims: to help young carers improve their own quality of life by taking part in opportunities which are the norm for their non-caring peers and to provide some recognition of their unpaid caring role. In addition, stakeholders felt that the grant had the potential to open up access to other support.

Though the application process and delivery of the benefit was generally viewed positively, the commissioned research did outline some considerations designed to improve the experience of Young Carer Grant. These mostly related to the promotion of the grant and how the grant is understood by young carers, as well as the eligibility criteria and application process.

Similarly, while there is evidence of the grant having a positive impact – on young carers' ability to do things that are the norm for their non-caring peers, on their sense of choice and control, on their mental wellbeing and on their feelings of recognition – there are limitations to what a financial payment can achieve.

The issues highlighted in this evaluation will be considered when reviewing benefit promotion activity and the application process. More broadly, the findings will be considered when developing future Young Carer Grant policy and the Scottish replacement for Carer's Allowance, which will be developed to complement existing and planned interventions to support carers both through social security and at a wider government level.

Introduction

This section introduces Young Carer Grant, the rationale behind its implementation, the eligibility criteria, the application process, and the overall evaluation aims relevant to this report.

Young Carer Grant: Description and policy context

The Social Security powers that have been devolved through the [Scotland Act 2016](#) give the Scottish Parliament responsibility for £2.8 billion of social security expenditure (around 15% of total benefit expenditure in Scotland) which are enacted through the [Social Security \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#).

The Young Carer Grant is one of the new benefits implemented with the use of those devolved powers. It forms part of the strategic commitment to carers both in terms of social security support and wider government support for carers. Announced by the First Minister in 2017 as part of a package of support for young carers, it is a one off payment (£308.15 in 2021/22), which can be applied for annually, for young people aged 16, 17 or 18 with caring responsibilities. It was launched in October 2019.

Along with Young Carer Grant, in June 2019 the Young Scot young carers platform was launched. This provides all young carers aged 11-18 with access to extra discounts at shops and venues along with other exclusive benefits. The Scottish Government also committed that recipients of Young Carer Grant would have access to free bus travel. The Scottish Government, elected in 2021, is working towards providing free bus travel to all residents of Scotland aged 21 and under from 31 January 2022. This will allow all young carers aged 21 and under to access free bus travel.

The [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) made provisions that mean every young carer in Scotland has the right to a Young Carer Statement. These are carried out by local authorities and identify the personal circumstances of each young carer and what support the young carer may need.

Young Carer Grant: Rationale for implementation

The Scottish Government has an overall aim that carers are supported on a consistent basis to allow them to continue caring, if that is their wish, in good health and wellbeing, allowing for a life of their own outside of caring¹.

Research has shown that many young carers are more likely to be living in low income households, feel socially isolated and have poorer physical and mental health and wellbeing than non-carers². Young people aged 16, 17 and 18 are often at transition point in their lives as they move into the adult world. They may be finishing school, getting a first job, undertaking further study or taking up new

¹ Scottish Government (2019) [Carers strategic policy statement: consultation](#)

² Scottish Government (2017) [Young carers: review of research and data](#)

leisure opportunities. For many young people with caring responsibilities, their opportunities may be limited by their caring role.

The overall aims of Young Carer Grant are to:

- help young carers improve their own quality of life by taking part in opportunities which are the norm for their non-caring peers
- provide some recognition of their unpaid caring role

Young Carer Grant: Eligibility

To be eligible for the payment carers must be 16, 17 or 18 years old. They also must have been caring for an average of 16 hours a week for someone normally in receipt of one or more of the qualifying benefits for at least 13 weeks before application³. The care cannot be part of a volunteer scheme or as part of a paid job, and the policy intention is that young carers cannot be in receipt of Carer's Allowance.

On 1 April 2020 Young Carer Grant became open to applicants with no recourse to public funds, allowing young carers subject to immigration control to safely apply for Young Carer Grant without risking their immigration status.

If more than one carer applies for the same cared for person, only the first eligible application will get the grant. If the young carer provides shared care with someone else aged 16 to 18, they should agree who should apply for the grant. This policy will be referred to as the "one carer rule" for the remainder of this report.

Young carers can apply if they are at school, in further education, or unemployed and they can spend the grant as they choose

Evidence from stakeholder groups indicates that some young carers (particularly those with LGBT and minority-ethnic protected characteristics) may face barriers in applying for support services⁴.

Young Carer Grant: Application Process

Young carers in Scotland can apply online, over the phone or by post for Young Carer Grant. The application asks the young carer for information about themselves including age, address and National Insurance Number. They are also asked to provide information about the person/people they care for including their address, National Insurance Number, hours they are cared for and the benefit the cared-for person receives.

³ These include: the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP); the middle or highest care rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), including Child Disability Living Allowance; Attendance Allowance; Armed Forces Independence Payment; Constant Attendance Allowance.

⁴ Scottish Government (2019) [Young Carer Grant: equality impact assessment](#)

However, although applicants are asked for the National Insurance Numbers of themselves and the cared-for person, and the qualifying benefit the cared for person receives, it is not necessary to provide this in the application. Social Security Scotland can still verify this information and process the application, but it may increase the time taken.

Once an application has been received the young carer is then asked to provide evidence of their address. This can be posted into Social Security Scotland or uploaded to them online.

Social Security Scotland will write to the cared-for person informing them that someone has applied for Young Carer Grant citing them as their cared-for person. The cared-for person does not need to reply to this letter if they believe everything is correct as Social Security Scotland does not ask for any proof that the care is taking place. If no care is being provided they can contact Social Security Scotland and let them know.

Young carers with a genuine and sufficient link to Scotland living outside the UK in the European Economic Area and Switzerland can also apply for Young Carer Grant over the phone or by post. They are required to provide more evidence to show that they are eligible for a Scottish benefit and to confirm their identity.

All applicants can also ask for a reminder to be sent after 12 months reminding them that they may be able to apply for the next year's payment. This is optional so only young carers who think they will be eligible for Young Carer Grant in 12 months receive this reminder.

Evaluation aims

The Scottish Government published their approach to evaluating the first of the devolved social security benefits, including Young Carer Grant, in November 2019⁵.

This interim evaluation aims to provide learning about the overall implementation of the benefit over the first 18 months of delivery, and the extent to which the short and medium-term objectives of Young Carer Grant have been met. In doing so, it can also assess the likely contribution of Young Carer Grant to longer-term government outcomes for carers which take account of wider Scottish Government interventions outside of social security which are also designed to support carers.

Specifically, the evaluation objectives are to:

1. Evaluate the extent to which Young Carer Grant achieved its policy objectives
2. Assess the likely contribution of Young Carer Grant to wider long-term government outcomes for carers
3. Discuss any implications for future policy development

⁵ Scottish Government (2019) [Devolved benefits: evaluating the policy impact](#)

The findings will provide groundwork for policy improvement and feed into the development for the full evaluation of Young Carer Grant scheduled for 2023/2024. This full evaluation will take place once the benefit has been live for at least three years, by which time eligible carers may have received three separate grants and the full impact of the grant can be better assessed. At this point, we are only reporting on the impact of the initial payments.

Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the evaluation approach for Young Carer Grant. It introduces the logic model and research questions driving the evaluation activities, and gives a summary of the different data sources used.

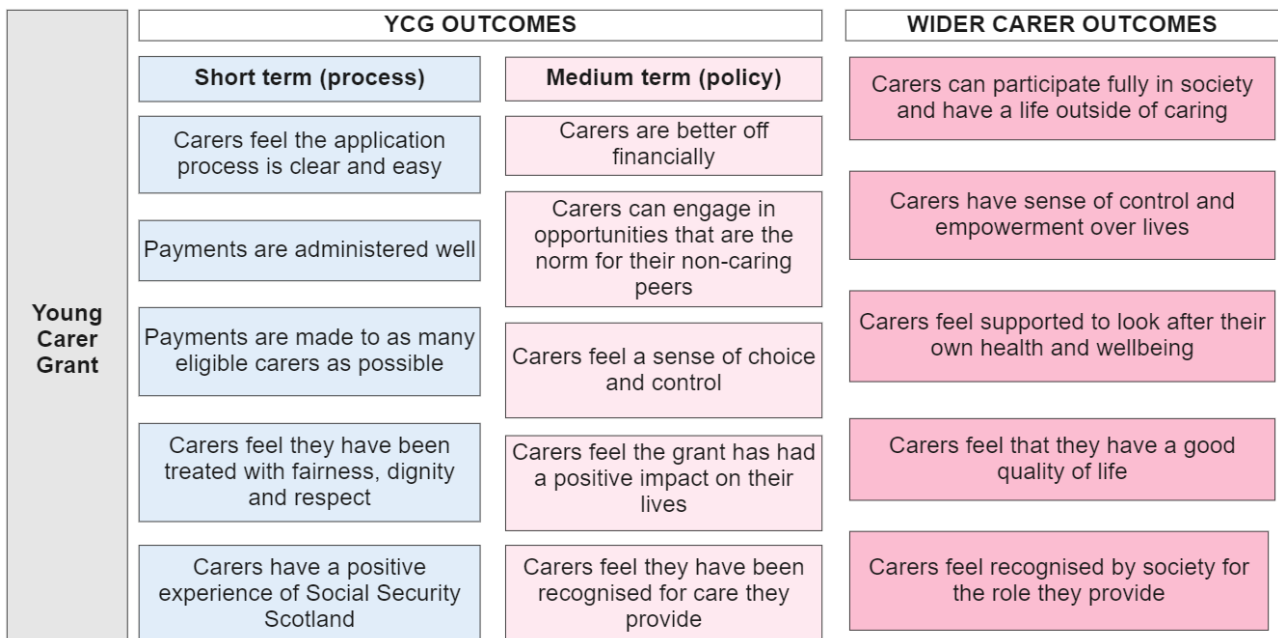
Overview of evaluation design and logic model

The approach to evaluating the policy impact of Young Carer Grant uses a “theory of change” model. This approach uses logic models to show the mechanisms whereby interventions (such as Young Carer Grant) have a chain of short and medium-term outcomes that, if met, can contribute to longer-term outcomes.

The high-level outcomes that the Scottish Government are trying to influence with regards to carers, such as improved health and wellbeing, increased societal participation, improved quality of life, increased feelings of control and empowerment, and increased societal recognition, will take time to determine and are affected by a range of factors of which social security is only one.

As a result, it is difficult to measure and attribute change in these outcomes to a single benefit, such as Young Carer Grant. However, we can reasonably expect that if success against short- and medium-term policy outcomes associated with Young Carer Grant is achieved, then this could contribute (to some extent) to better outcomes in the future.

The logic model for Young Carer Grant is below:



The short-term Young Carer Grant policy outcomes are relevant to the process of delivery and are highlighted in light blue in the logic model while the medium-term policy outcomes are highlighted in light pink. These outcomes are those which are linked to the intentions of Young Carer Grant itself and are outlined below:

Short-term outcomes (process)

- Carers feel the application process is clear and easy
- Payments are administered well
- Payments are made to as many eligible carers as possible
- Carers feel they have been treated with fairness, dignity and respect
- Carers have a positive experience of Social Security Scotland

Medium-term outcomes (policy)

- Carers are better off financially
- Carers can engage in opportunities that are the norm for their non-caring peers
- Carers feel a sense of choice and control
- Carers feel the grant has had a positive impact on their lives
- Carers feel they have been recognised for the care they provide

Long-term outcomes

The long-term outcomes in the logic model are highlighted in dark pink and relate to wider government outcomes for carers. These are affected by all social security interventions, as well as other interventions designed to support carers across the Scottish Government. As such, Young Carer Grant will play an important, but not exclusive, role in contributing to these. These draft outcomes map on closely to those that were developed by Scottish Government officials with the Carer Benefit Advisory Group⁶ and those that are outlined in the Carers strategic policy statement⁷. This wide approach has resulted in some outcomes which are benefit specific and/or focussed on financial entitlement while others are more carer focused and take in to account of carers' life outside of caring.

- Carers can participate fully in society and have a life outside of caring
- Carers have a sense of control and empowerment over their lives
- Carers feel supported to look after their own health and wellbeing
- Carers feel that they have a good quality of life
- Carers feel recognised by society for the role they provide

Evidence will be collected as to the extent to which Young Carer Grant has achieved the short and medium-term policy outcomes. We can expect that if success has been achieved, this might have a positive contributory impact on the wider outcomes for carers in the long-term. However, we will be unable to measure

⁶ [Carer Benefits Advisory Group minutes: February 2016](#)

⁷ [Carers strategic policy statement: consultation](#). These outcomes are in draft form.

this in any robust way with the data available, given that Young Carer Grant is just one intervention that we may expect to be feeding in to these wider outcomes.

Summary of data sources

In accordance with the evaluation strategy, multiple data sources fed into the evidence collected and these are described below.

Official Statistics

Social Security Scotland collects certain information on Young Carer Grant applications, payments, and clients in the process of delivering the benefits. Some of this information is published as official statistics and is used in this evaluation report. All official statistics discussed in this report are the latest available and cover the period from 21 October 2019 to 30 April 2021⁸ (approximately 18 months of applications). Figures are rounded for disclosure control and may not sum due to rounding. Data on client diversity and equality of application outcomes for clients applying to Social Security Scotland covers the period from June 2020 to November 2020⁹.

Social Security Scotland research activity

The first Social Security Scotland Client Survey ran from 17 August to 25 September 2020¹⁰. It was open to everyone who had received a Social Security Scotland benefit or had received a decision on an application for a benefit from the beginning of Social Security Scotland in September 2018 to July 2020. The survey collected equalities and socio-economic information on applicants and asked about key aspects of respondents' experience of Social Security Scotland, and of receiving the benefits.

3,253 people responded to the survey (around 2% of those who were sent invites) - and 2% of these had applied for Young Carer Grant which equates to 71 responses. This will be referred to as the "Client Survey" for the remainder of this report. Please note the number of respondents providing a valid answer to each individual question/statement varied slightly in the ranges shown.

Bespoke Commissioned Research

Ipsos MORI Scotland was commissioned by the Scottish Government to conduct qualitative research with young carers, and stakeholders that work with them, to explore the experience of, and early impact of, Young Carer Grant on the lives of those that receive it.

The research mainly focussed on carers' experience of receiving the benefit and the ways, and extent to which, the impacts of receiving Young Carer Grant mapped on to Young Carer Grant policy objectives (and short-term and medium-term outcomes outlined above). However, within this there were additional aims, such as

⁸ [Young Carer Grant: high level statistics to 30 April 2021](#)

⁹ [Social Security Scotland client diversity and equalities analysis to November 2020](#)

¹⁰ [Social Security Scotland Client Survey 2018-2020](#).

exploring barriers to claiming Young Carer Grant and the impact of certain eligibility criteria.

The findings have been used alongside the other data sources in this report to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and impact of Young Carer Grant at this early stage of delivery.

In-depth qualitative interviews, lasting around 45 minutes to 1 hour, were conducted with 22 young carers across Scotland and 6 interviews with key stakeholders were also held. Fieldwork took place via telephone or Zoom between December 2020 and February 2021. The full report from Ipsos MORI Scotland is available at Annex A and the key conclusions have been incorporated into the findings below.

Limitations

This section explains what we can and cannot determine from the data available, and how this influences the extent to which we can draw conclusions about the early impact of Young Carer Grant.

Role of qualitative research: This evaluation is largely dependent on the findings emerging from bespoke qualitative research commissioned by the Scottish Government. As would be expected with qualitative work, findings are not representative across the entire Young Carer Grant caseload. There were limitations associated with the recruitment of young carers (especially attempts to ensure diverse representation across subsets of clients), and inherent reliance on recipients' perceptions of impacts. These limitations are outlined in further detail in the full qualitative findings report available in Annex A.

Role of Social Security Scotland research: The Social Security Scotland Client Survey statistics contained in this report are based on 71 responses from clients who applied for Young Carer Grant (and the number of respondents providing a valid answer to each individual question/statement varies within the ranges shown). While the survey results provide rich insight into some of the experiences of Social Security Scotland clients, this small sample size means that we cannot assume that the results represent the views of Young Carer Grant clients as a whole, and are not generalisable. Furthermore, just 26 of the 71 respondents **only** applied for Young Carer Grant, while the remainder said they had experience of applying for or receiving other benefits from Social Security Scotland, (for example, 40 said they had received Carer's Allowance Supplement). These respondents may have been basing answers on their experience of applying for/receiving both benefits, which should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

Focus on contribution rather than attribution: As noted above, Young Carer Grant is just one intervention across social security and wider governmental support for carers. As such there are other factors that we may expect to feed into wider outcomes for young carers - including impacts of the Young Scot young carers platform and carers' rights to advice and support under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. Therefore, we only have a partial understanding of how Young Carer Grant is related to longer-term outcomes and we can only assess the contribution that Young Carer Grant may have had by assessing the extent to which it has

achieved its own policy objectives. We cannot directly attribute long-term outcomes to Young Carer Grant, and overall, we are unable to rule whether any impacts we may see have occurred as a result of other factors.

Longer-term impacts will take time to determine: To understand the true impact of Young Carer Grant, we would ideally measure whether there is lasting change in the longer-term outcomes and impacts, and be able to isolate the influence of Young Carer Grant from the other factors contributing to this. This is difficult due to the considerations regarding attribution outlined above. However, the full evaluation of Young Carer Grant scheduled for 2023/24 will provide further learning of the impact of the benefit once it has been live for at least three years.

Findings

This section presents the findings of the evaluation in terms of the achievement of Young Carer Grant against short-term and medium-term policy objectives. In doing so, it also highlights the likely contribution of Young Carer Grant to wider long-term government outcomes for carers. It also discusses the policy implications identified through the qualitative research.

Achievement against short-term policy outcomes

This section assesses Young Carer Grant against the following policy outcomes:

- Carers feel the application process is clear and easy
- Payments are administered well
- Payments are made to as many eligible carers as possible
- Carers feel they have been treated with fairness, dignity and respect
- Carers have a positive experience of Social Security Scotland

It uses data from Official Statistics, Social Security Scotland research and the commissioned research.

Carers feel the application process is clear and easy

The application process has been detailed above. Official statistics show that of the 5,390 applications received up to 30 April 2021, around 94% were made online. Around 3% were made through telephone applications. The remaining 2% were made through paper application.

Findings from the Client Survey suggest that out of 70-71¹¹ Young Carer Grant respondents:

- 97% said their experience of the application process overall was 'very good' or 'good'
- 90% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the application process was clear
- 86% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the application asked only relevant questions

Young carers involved in the commissioned research generally found the application process to be easy and straightforward. Those who had experience of applying for other financial support felt the Young Carer Grant process was easier in comparison.

Young carers typically applied online and found this to be convenient and accessible.

¹¹ The number of respondents providing a valid answer to each individual question/statement varied slightly in the range shown.

When asked if there were any difficult parts of the application process, recipients mentioned that the length of the application could be off-putting for some and there were some questions where they had to get input from their parents or the person they cared for. However, neither of these were seen, by recipients, as major deterrents to applying.

Stakeholders though, provided further evidence that difficulties with the application process could be a barrier to many other young carers, specifically those living in chaotic households where it is difficult for them to find the information they need in order to apply. One non-recipient in this study also explained that they did not complete their application because of difficulties meeting application deadlines.

There was a view among participants who had applied more than once that subsequent applications were quicker because they could carry over some information from their original application. However, there was a suggestion among both young carers and stakeholders that this process could be streamlined further, for example, by being able to save evidence submitted as part of the initial application in a portal.

The extent to which young carers relied on support to apply for the grant was mixed. While there were participants who completed their application independently, it was common for members of young carer organisations to be proactive in offering advice and support. Stakeholders reported a high degree of variability in the amount of support they had to provide to young carers engaging in the application process.

There were mixed experiences among participants who identified as having a learning or processing difficulties. One participant with dyslexia found the application easier than they were expecting, while another who said he had difficulty with reading and writing found the idea of applying on his own intimidating. Stakeholders indicated that young carers with learning difficulties often needed extra support.

Payments are administered well

Official statistics provide some information on processing times, calculated by determining the time between an application being received and a decision being made or the application being withdrawn. This includes the time spent waiting to receive evidence from clients to allow a decision to be made, which should be considered when interpreting these processing times.

Statistics show that of the 5,390 applications received up to 30 April 2021, 5,155 had been processed. Around 38% of applications with a decision by 30 April 2021 were processed within 10 working days, around 57% within 15 working days, and around 31% took 21 days or longer to be processed. The median average processing time was 13 working days.

Findings from the Client Survey suggest that out of 70 - 71 Young Carer Grant respondents:

- 83% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their application was handled within a reasonable time frame
- 71% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they got enough updates on the progress of their application

Out of 19 - 33 Young Carer Grant respondents to the Client Survey:

- 97% rated their experience of receiving social security payments as 'very good' or 'good'
- 88% said they got payments when Social Security Scotland said they would
- 97% said that they were paid the right amount 'first time'
- 89% said they were paid the right amount 'every time'

Payments are made to as many eligible carers as possible

The best way to assess the performance against this outcome would be to use estimates of take-up expressed as the number of people who received a benefit payment among all those eligible for that benefit (including those who did not apply).

Estimating take-up rates for carer benefits is challenging due to the difficulty in identifying the size of the carer population who do not claim. This is difficult due to the complexity of eligibility criteria which are based on the hours of care given and the cared for person's receipt of disability benefit. For Young Carer Grant these challenges are more pronounced because the benefit targets a much smaller sub-group of general population (aged 16 to 18) which further limits the ability to identify the total eligible population through population surveys.

Official statistics show that of the 5,155 Young Carer Grant applications processed up to 30 April 2021, 71% were authorised, 26% were denied, and 2% were withdrawn.

Preliminary investigation into management information revealed that applications denied frequently failed the following eligibility:

- The applicant must be caring for an average of 16 hours per week, over a 13-week period
- The applicant must not have been approved for Young Carer Grant within the last year

By failing the latter eligibility criteria, it means the applicant had already been approved for a Young Carer Grant payment within the last year.

Management information collected manually by the Client Experience team at Social Security Scotland indicates that 90 re-determinations were requested by 30 April 2021. This represents around 1.7% of the total number of Young Carer Grant applications processed during this period. By 30 April 2021, 85 re-determination requests had been decided. Of these, 40 were allowed or partially allowed, while 30 were denied and 15 were withdrawn.

In total, 3,615 payments were issued up to 30 April 2021. The total number of clients who have received payment was 2,945. Of these, 2,280 clients had received one payment and 670 clients had received two payments.

Applications were received from young people living in all local authorities. At local authority level, the highest total payments value of £156,261 were made to young carers in Glasgow City, £89,784 to North Lanarkshire, and £70,713 to Fife.

Further analysis of the data for the period from 21 October 2019 to 30 April 2021 was undertaken to show the number of payments issued by SIMD 2020 quintile¹². It shows that just under 60% of payments were made to those living in the 40% most deprived areas (quintiles 1 or 2).

Table 1: Young Carer Grant number of payments issued by SIMD 2020 Quintile

SIMD 2020 Quintile						Total payments issued
Not known	1	2	3	4	5	
20	1,270	865	610	510	340	3,615

Official Statistics also provides information about the characteristics and caring circumstances of applicants.

Of the 5,390 applications received, approximately 39% were for an applicant aged 16 years. A further 38% were for an applicant aged 17 years, and 21% were for an applicant aged 18 years.

Social Security Scotland client diversity and equalities analysis covering June 2020 to November 2020¹³ also provides a view of people with protected characteristics who applied for Young Carer Grant over the period of benefit delivery. The figures summarised below refer to those who have applied for Young Carer Grant payments but some may have been denied a payment. Detailed information on the number of applicants approved and denied by the equalities groups is available in the official publication. The headline figures on applicants only are:

- 92% (1,230) of applicants identified themselves as 'White', 4% (50) as Asian, 1% (20) as Mixed or multiple ethnic groups, and 2% (25) preferred not to say. Those identifying as African, Caribbean or Black, or another ethnic group made up less than 1%.
- 57% (760) of applicants identified themselves as women, 41% (545) as men, 2% (25) preferred not to say, and 1% (10) identified in another way. This is slightly different to the caseload for Carer's Allowance where 69% are women

¹² [Scottish Index Multiple Deprivation 2020](#). The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is a relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones). Deprivation quintiles are created by ordering data zones from 1 (most deprived) to 6,976 (least deprived) and grouping 20% of the Data Zones in each quintile from 1 (most deprived) to 5 (least deprived).

¹³ [Social Security Scotland client diversity and equalities analysis to November 2020](#)

and 31% men¹⁴ but similar to clients on Carers' Allowance in Scotland aged 16 to 18 (55% women and 45% men)¹⁵.

- 15% (195) of applicants identified themselves as having a physical or mental condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more. 7% (95) preferred not to say.
- 83% (1,105) of applicants identified themselves as heterosexual, 5% (70) as bisexual, 3% (35) as gay and lesbian. 1% (10) identified in another way and 9% (115) preferred not to say.
- 2% (20) of applicants identified themselves as transgender and 2% (30) preferred not say.
- 65% of applicants (865) did not identify with any religion while 5% preferred not to say. 13% (170) identified as Roman Catholic, 10% (135) as Church of Scotland, 3% (35) as other Christian, 4% (50) as Muslim, and other religious groups made up less than 1%.

The Client Survey shows that 99% of respondents (out of 68) agreed with application decisions made by Social Security Scotland on their applications.

The commissioned research explored barriers to applying for Young Carer Grant. Young carers and stakeholders identified a lack of awareness of the grant as a major barrier to those eligible to apply. There was a view that the grant was not widely known about, and this would especially affect 'hidden carers' who were not engaged with young carer services.

There was a suggestion that the grant could be advertised more, particularly on social media. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of using inclusive language when promoting the grant, in order to reach eligible young people who may not identify as young carers themselves.

Among recipients, there could be some initial reluctance to take up the grant due to how they perceived themselves and their caring role. For example, a perception that other people needed the money more than they did or not wanting their cared-for person to be seen as a 'burden' they had to be compensated for.

Stakeholders highlighted that a lack of consent from parents or the cared-for person could be a barrier. They thought the main reasons for a lack of consent were a fear that receipt of Young Carer Grant would affect other family members' benefit entitlements, a fear of social services becoming involved, or not accepting a young person's carer status. Stakeholders explained that cultural values may mean some minority ethnic families are less likely to accept or fully understand the term 'young carer'.

Carers feel they have been treated with fairness, dignity and respect

¹⁴ [Benefits for carers and disability assistance at November 2020: summary statistics](#)

¹⁵ Latest available Stat-Xplore (Nov 20) author calculation.

Findings from the Client Survey suggest that out of 69 - 71 Young Carer Grant respondents:

- 94% felt that Social Security Scotland had treated them fairly
- 94% felt that Social Security Scotland had treated them with respect
- 93% felt that Social Security Scotland had treated them with dignity
- 1% felt that they had been discriminated against at some point during their experience with Social Security Scotland

Commissioned research explored the impact of the requirement that only one young carer can receive the grant in respect of any one cared-for person, referred to as the 'one carer rule'. Although none of the participants had missed out on the grant due to this rule, they raised concerns that it was unfair to carers who may still have demanding care role, despite sharing responsibility with another young carer.

One recipient explained that the rule would have been a barrier for her, had her brother not agreed to let her apply instead of him because he had a job and more money than she did. More generally, there was a suggestion that younger siblings or less confident young carers would be disproportionately disadvantaged as a result of this rule.

There was also concern among stakeholders that the eligibility criteria for receiving the grant were excluding too many young carers with significant caring responsibilities. These concerns centred predominantly on the requirement that the cared-for person be in receipt of particular benefits.

Carers have a positive experience of Social Security Scotland

The Client Survey's highest level question asked respondents how they would rate their overall experience with Social Security Scotland. Out of 71 respondents 97% said that their overall experience was 'very good' or 'good'. None said their experience was 'poor' or 'very poor'.

In addition, of 69 - 71 Young Carer Grant respondents to the Client Survey:

- 83% felt that they could trust Social Security Scotland
- 83% felt that Social Security Scotland was an honest organisation

Achievement against medium-term policy outcomes

This section assesses Young Carer Grant against the following policy outcomes:

- Carers are better off financially
- Carers can engage in opportunities that are the norm for their non-caring peers
- Carers feel a sense choice and control
- Carers feel the grant has had a positive impact on their lives
- Carers feel they have been recognised for the care they provide

It uses data from Official Statistics, Social Security Scotland research and the commissioned research.

Carers are better off financially

The total value of Young Carer Grant payments issued up to 30 April 2021 was £1.1 million. Of this, £339,900 was issued in financial year 2019/20, £694,725 was issued in financial year 2020/21 and the remaining £61,810 issued in the current 2021/22 financial year.

On 1 April 2021, the value of payment for Young Carer Grant was uprated from £305.10 to £308.15¹⁶. Successful applications received before 1 April 2021 will still receive a payment of £305.10.

Young Carers participating in the commissioned research made few comments on the amount of the grant although there was a view that it “could be more”. Stakeholders acknowledged that there were limited funds but some also felt that a larger amount would have more impact (one suggested around £600).

Carers can engage in opportunities that are the norm for their non-caring peers

Commissioned research indicated that Young Carer Grant had a positive impact on young carers’ ability to take part in opportunities that are the norm for their non-caring peers.

Young carers that participated used the grant in a wide range of ways and in very much the same ways as teenagers in general tend to spend their money: on clothes, socialising with friends, putting it into savings (for driving lessons, for example), on electronic devices, on hobbies and on presents for family¹⁷. More exceptionally, they spent it on rent or food.

If they had not received the grant, participants generally indicated that they would have had to go without all or some of the things they purchased and missed out on the activities they had been able to take part in.

Carers feel a sense choice and control

Respondents to the Client Survey were asked about the impact that benefit payments from Social Security Scotland have had for them - on a scale of zero (‘not at all’) to ten (‘a lot’) and results were categorised into the following average ratings:

- Helped to control finances - 7.2 rating
- Helped to pay for what was needed - 8.3 rating

There was also evidence in the commissioned research of the grant helping to increase young carers’ sense of choice and control over their lives. Most immediately, participants were generally clear that it was up to them how they spent

¹⁶ The original payment amount when launched was £300.00.

¹⁷ The research found that those who had received the grant after COVID-19 restrictions came into force were less likely to have spent the money on socialising with friends.

the grant, and that, in the absence of the grant, they would have had to go without all or some of the things they purchased. More broadly, there was also evidence of it increasing young carers' sense of control over their lives, by making them feel more independent, more confident, less anxious and getting better at saving.

Carers feel the grant has had a positive impact on their lives

Respondents to the Client Survey gave the following rating when asked about the overall difference social security payments had made to their lives:

- Helped make a difference to life - 8.3 rating (based on 33 responses)

Almost all participants involved in the commissioned research reported a positive (albeit not necessarily a very large) impact on their mental wellbeing, mainly by reducing stress and increasing confidence.

The impact on young carers' physical health was somewhat limited but there were examples of participants spending some of their grant on things that would benefit it - such as exercise equipment, gym membership and dance classes.

More indirectly, stakeholders participating in the commissioned research felt that the grant had the potential to open up access to other support (by encouraging people to find out if they were young carers; through sign-posting applicants to other services; and by encouraging applications for other support in the future).

However, there is a limit to what a financial payment can do and the grant had no direct impact on some of the negative aspects of being a young carer that were most commonly mentioned by participants.

One of the main challenges of being a young carer is the lack of time to relax, do their own thing and spend time with friends. Although the grant gave recipients the opportunity to take part in some activities with friends that they would not otherwise have been able to afford, and to treat themselves during their limited free time, it could not fundamentally increase the amount of free time they have available.

Young carers also had anxieties about the health of their cared-for person. Depending on the condition, these might be on-going concerns such as whether they might have a seizure, longer-term concerns about their health worsening or simply the difficulty of seeing someone they love being in pain and not being able to do anything about it. While, for some young carers, the grant did help reduce other specific stresses or have a positive impact on feelings of wellbeing more generally, it could not be expected to reduce these types of concerns.

Carers feel they have been recognised for the care they provide

Young carers had mixed views on whether receiving the grant had helped them feel more recognised. Some felt that it had made no difference but, more commonly, young carers did feel that it had helped at least a little. There was a sense in which both the introduction and existence of the grant, and the fact that they had been deemed eligible to receive it, provided recognition and validation.

Evidence of positive progress towards wider long-term outcomes for carers

This section will focus on the following wider government outcomes for carers:

- Carers can participate fully in society and have a life outside of caring
- Carers have a sense of control and empowerment over their lives
- Carers feel supported to look after their own health and wellbeing
- Carers feel that they have a good quality of life
- Carers feel recognised by society for the role they provide

These outcomes relate to the way in which wider government support has impacted on the lives of carers. As outlined in the Methodology chapter, it is difficult to evaluate the impact of Young Carer Grant on these outcomes. Not only will these long-term outcomes take time to determine, but the contribution of Young Carer Grant is difficult to measure and attribute given wider factors feeding in to achievement against these outcomes.

Nonetheless, we can expect that if success has been achieved against the short and medium-term policy outcomes, this might have a positive contributory impact on the wider outcomes for carers in the long term.

Across all data sources, the evaluation findings suggest that Young Carer Grant was welcomed and viewed broadly positively by applicants, recipients and stakeholders. It also appears to be meeting its overall aims: to help young carers improve their own quality of life by taking part in opportunities which are the norm for their non-caring peers and to provide some recognition of their unpaid caring role.

However, findings from the commissioned research suggested that there is a limit to what a financial payment can do, and the grant had no direct impact on some of the negative aspects of being a young carer, which influence these wider outcomes.

Implications of evaluation findings.

As part of the commissioned qualitative research, Ipsos MORI were asked to outline any implications that their research findings may have for future policy development. They are available in the full qualitative report in Annex A.

The two considerations below relate to the promotion of the grant and how the grant is understood by young carers.

Raising awareness of Young Carer Grant: Stakeholders highlighted that a lack of awareness of the grant was a particular barrier for 'hidden carers' who are not engaged with support services. Young carers and stakeholders both suggested improved advertising, specifically on social media. There was also a strong appetite for more promotion in schools.

Tackling misconceptions and providing reassurance: There were a number of misconceptions about the grant and the eligibility criteria which might deter some young carers from applying and might deter their parents from assisting or encouraging them. Clarification and reassurance about the following points in promotional materials and on the website could increase uptake: reinforcing the fact that it is entirely up to the young carer how they spend the money and that there is no need to produce receipts or explain and justify how they have spent it; providing reassurances that receipt of Young Carer Grant would have no impact on other benefits received by the young carer or their cared-for person; reinforcing the fact that the grant is available to 16, 17 and 18 year olds. In addition, there were cultural barriers among some minority ethnic communities both in terms of seeing someone as a 'young carer' and accessing support. Stakeholders highlighted a general need to provide culturally sensitive services and information, including on Young Carer Grant.

Social Security Scotland continues to promote Young Carer Grant to help increase awareness and take up of the grant. The findings from this report will be used to improve the impact of this work when considering future promotion.

The findings also highlighted how young carers applied and how their applications are treated may be improved to increase accessibility of the grant and reduce the negative impact to young carers who may not be eligible for Young Carer Grant.

Simplifying the application process: While the application form itself was seen as relatively straightforward, there also a suggestion that it could be simplified further. It was noted that the current wording is similar to the Carer's Allowance form, but Young Carer Grant is a different kind of benefit and could be less formal and more 'young person friendly'. Stakeholders highlighted that this was an important consideration to make the grant as accessible as possible for those with learning difficulties or those for whom English is not their first language.

There was a view among participants who had applied more than once that subsequent applications were quicker because they could carry over some information from their original application. They felt it would be beneficial to make young carers aware of this, to make them more likely to reapply for Young Carer Grant in future. There was also a suggestion that the process could be streamlined further for subsequent applications, for example, being able to save evidence submitted as part of the initial application.

Sensitive handling of unsuccessful applications: While a successful application made some young carers feel more recognised, there was a concern from a stakeholder that it may have the opposite effect on people who apply but find they are not eligible¹⁸ - they may feel less recognised than they did before. Moreover, the experience may discourage them for applying for other forms of support in the future. It is therefore very important that unsuccessful applications are handled sensitively and applicants understand that, while they may not

¹⁸ No young carers in this position were interviewed during the course of the research.

(currently) be eligible for grant, there are other services available for young carers and they should not be deterred from accessing them. This would also be an opportunity to sign-post to other services.

Social Security Scotland collects its own data from clients around their experience of applying for support. The evaluation findings will be used alongside this data when reviewing the application in future.

Ipsos MORI also identified implications for certain areas of Young Carer Grant policy.

Reviewing the ‘one carer rule’: While there was an acknowledgement that there is a limited amount of money, the one carer rule was generally seen as unfair by young carers and stakeholders and a deterrence to applying. There was a suggestion that younger siblings or less confident young carers would be disadvantaged (because older and/or more confident siblings would establish a right to the grant first). The young carer who misses out on the grant may feel less valued (possibly less valued than they felt before they were aware of the grant) and this could lead them to believe they are less of a young carer than the person who successfully applied for the grant, or question their young carer status entirely – with reduced confidence in their carer status discouraging them for applying for support as a carer in the future.

Reviewing the benefits criteria: There was concern among stakeholders that the requirement that the cared-for person is in receipt of certain benefits was excluding too many young carers with significant caring responsibilities. Stakeholders highlighted that benefits may not always be a reliable measure of how much somebody relies on support from a young carer. There was a view that the benefits requirement could present a particular barrier to minority ethnic young carers, as people in these communities were less likely to access this kind of disability support.

Review the upper age limit: Stakeholders were generally supportive of the age criteria. However, there was a suggestion that young adult carers in full-time education would benefit from receiving Young Carer Grant as they would not be eligible for Carer’s Allowance.

To keep the application process as easy and unobtrusive as possible only one young carer can apply per cared for person, known as the ‘one carer rule’. The Scottish Government has continued to monitor how this rule has affected young carers. Any changes to the eligibility will need to ensure the application remains easily accessible. We will consider whether it would be possible or desirable to extend entitlement to young people caring for a person not entitled to a disability entitlement, where all the other rules for Young Carer Grant are met.

The final of the three recommendations on policy development also relates to the current support provided by Carer’s Allowance. The Scottish Government is currently developing the Scottish replacement for Carer’s Allowance and these

findings will be considered along with how Young Carer Grant interacts with this new benefit.

The last consideration does not only relate to Young Carer Grant but more to the wider support available to carers outside of social security.

Broader implications: One of the main challenges of being a young carer is the lack of time to relax, 'do their own thing' and spend time with friends. Although the grant gave recipients the opportunity to take part in some activities with friends that they would not otherwise have been able to afford, and to treat themselves during their limited free time, it could not fundamentally increase the amount of free time they have available. This points to a broader need to provide young carers with regular opportunities for respite – not necessarily for any great length of time – so that they have a chance to 'do their own thing' (which may be at home or outside the home) and relax, knowing that their cared-for person is safe.

The Scottish Government brought forward the Carers Act to enhance and extend the rights of all carers to support across the country. This includes every young carer's right to a Young Carer Statement to identify what is important to them. This must include information on the impact of caring on their wellbeing and whether the care provided is appropriate.

It is crucial that all young carers are supported to have a life alongside caring, and that they are able to sustain and improve their own health and wellbeing. All young carers are encouraged to speak to their local Young Carer Service who can support them with balancing time for themselves and their caring duties. The Scottish Government is in regular touch with young carer representatives to make sure the concerns of young carers are understood and acted on accordingly.

Conclusions

Although Young Carer Grant is fully rolled-out, its impacts for individuals can only be assessed more fully after at least 3 years from the roll-out, by which time eligible young carers will have had a chance to receive multiple payments. We intend to commission a further evaluation to report in 2023/24 on these carers' experiences. This evaluation only considered the impact of the first payments and relied predominantly on qualitative data from commissioned research, research from Social Security Scotland and Official Statistics.

The evaluation findings suggest that Young Carer Grant was welcomed and viewed broadly positively by applicants, recipients and stakeholders. As outlined, it also appears to be meeting its overall aims: to help young carers improve their own quality of life by taking part in opportunities which are the norm for their non-caring peers and to provide some recognition of their unpaid caring role. In addition, stakeholders felt that the grant had the potential to open up access to other support.

Though the application process and delivery of the benefit was generally viewed positively, the commissioned research did outline some considerations designed to improve the experience of Young Carer Grant. These mostly related to the promotion of the grant and how the grant is understood by young carers, as well as the eligibility criteria and application process.

Similarly, while there is evidence of Young Carer Grant having a positive impact – on young carers' ability to do things that are the norm for their non-caring peers, on their sense of choice and control, on their mental wellbeing and on their feelings of recognition – there are limitations to what a financial payment can achieve.

However, the impact of Young Carer Grant should not be considered in isolation and, as outlined, there are many current or future Scottish Government initiatives are designed to address these considerations and contribute to delivering on the wider government outcomes for carers in time.

The issues highlighted in this evaluation will be considered when reviewing benefit promotion activity and the application process. More broadly, the findings will be considered when developing future Young Carer Grant policy and Scottish Carer's Assistance, to complement existing and planned interventions to support carers both through social security and at a wider government level.

Annex A

[Young Carer Grant - interim evaluation: qualitative research \(Annex A\) is available in PDF format.](#)

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

- are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- are available via an alternative route <specify or delete this text>
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact social_research@gov.scot for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.



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