

## Young Adult Carers Protocol- guidance for prospective and current students

### Definition

This protocol defines a **Young Adult Carer (YAC)** as someone aged **16-25 who is caring, unpaid, for a family member or friend who could not otherwise cope without support**. The person you care for might have an illness, disability, mental health condition or an addiction. You might have to cook family meals, help someone get dressed, take siblings to school, provide emotional support, or help someone to communicate. These tasks involve you taking on a level of responsibility in the place of a parent. The Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014, establishes the rights of Young Carers.

### Impact of the caring role

The College recognises that your caring role may not cause you any difficulty when studying. However, the statistics below highlight the problems faced by some YACs in our area:

- Young Adult Carers are more likely to have mental health problems and poorer school attendance than average.
- A student's caring role can limit your progression after college, with many choosing not to go to university due to their caring role or being limited to universities close to home.
- YACs are four times as likely to become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) as their non-caring peers.

**Therefore we want to make sure we are putting the right support in place so that you can succeed.**

### Applications and admissions

Given that a large percentage of YACs feel they are not able to continue with their education whilst caring at home, it is even more important to ensure that college is the right place for them to study. For this reason, Abingdon and Witney College provides bespoke campus tours for prospective students with caring responsibilities. This enables you to explore courses of interest at a convenient time, and to plan what support will be required. Please contact a member of our College Carers team to discuss this further with them (contact details at the end of this document).

At Abingdon and Witney College, we recognise that you may have had negative experiences at school when your caring role became known, sometimes through bullying by other students. It is therefore important that you feel comfortable in making your situation known to staff, with opportunities provided to discuss your situation both formally and informally.

YACs are identified initially when tutors fill out a **Support form at interview**. This is filled out for all students and details not only your caring responsibilities, but also any learning difficulties, physical disabilities or mental illness you may have. Once a YAC is identified, a member of Student Services will arrange to meet with you and your parent(s)/support worker where appropriate, to discuss your needs and concerns about college, including what to do if there is a family crisis. This may be combined with other support meetings scheduled.

YACs can also be identified through **contact between the college and local secondary schools**. The college will confirm that the school has received your consent to share the information. Once consent has been confirmed, a member of Student Services will meet with you to discuss their

needs, as would happen following a disclosure at interview. This can either take place at the college, via Microsoft Teams or by telephone.

All students receive **one-to-one meetings with their Progress Coach (PC)** throughout the year, and you are encouraged to share any difficulties with them during these meetings. You will have regular contact with your PC, and so they will also be available at other times to speak to if needed.

### **Academic Support**

It is important for you to attend all lessons and scheduled activities in order to succeed on your chosen course. However, the college acknowledges that for some YACs, this can be difficult due to your caring commitments. It may be necessary for you and your course leader to agree on allowances that can be made, and to record this. All relevant staff will be told about these.

Possible adjustments that can be made are listed below. These measures will only be put in place following agreement from the Carers Lead and Study Programme Lead/PC:

- **Special Late Cards permitting late arrival when caring responsibilities affect attendance.**
- **Independent study arrangements where absence is communicated in advance.**
- **College bursary to support essential learning costs.**
- **Study Coach referrals for tailored academic support.**
- **Extensions on assignments when caring duties impact deadlines.**
- **Laptop loans to support access to online learning and independent study.**
- **Links with external agencies for additional specialist guidance.**
- **College tours for prospective Young Adult Carer students (by appointment).**
- **Access to peer support groups, both online and on campus, to connect with others in similar circumstances.**
- **Attendance at meetings on behalf of a student's parent or designated next of kin when they are unable to be present.**
- **'Leave the Room' Cards, enabling students to leave lessons discreetly to take essential phone calls.**
- **Support with work experience placements.**

### **Pastoral support**

The college recognises that many students require pastoral support in order to complete their qualifications. This support is available to you in the same way that it would be for any other student and will be discussed with you during the initial meeting with a Student Services team member. The college has a contact point within Student Services for YACs, and they can help coordinate your support within college and will be the contact point for external organisations who work with YACs. For support please email [enrichment@abingdon-witney.ac.uk](mailto:enrichment@abingdon-witney.ac.uk) and a member of the team with contact you.

### **Safeguarding**

Abingdon and Witney College is committed to ensuring the safety of all students during their time at college. However, we recognise that safeguarding for YACs can be made more complex by your family circumstances, and by feeling protective of those at home.

We would like to reassure you that actions taken are in order to keep everyone in the home safe, and to get all members of the family the help and support they need. Discussing problems at an early stage can reduce the need for urgent action later, so you are encouraged to speak with a trusted member of staff as soon as a problem arises.

Please see the Safeguarding policy for more information on the college's safeguarding procedures. This can be found on the Student Support page of the college website.

### **Financial support**

For support with college costs, you can apply for a bursary from the college, or for an Advanced Learner Loan from Student Finance England, depending on your age and course level. Information on these can be found on the Student Support page under Fees and Bursaries on the college website by scrolling down to the Financial Support section. Special consideration for college bursaries will be given to YACs due to your circumstances. Please speak to the Student Services Carer team for support with your application if required.

### **Staff training**

Staff who are known to have YACs in their classes can receive training internally, to enable them to better support you and other YACs in your class.

### **Information sharing**

Whilst you may be apprehensive about discussing your caring role, there will be some members of staff who will need to know due to the impact your caring role will have on your course. It is best for you to speak to your course leader if possible, so that they can give extensions on assignments as required. This information will need to be passed on to your course leader if you initially tell a different member of staff. If information about your situation needs to be shared with another organisation for non-safeguarding reasons, we will always ask for your permission before sharing takes place.

For further details regarding anything in this document, please contact:

#### **Abingdon Campus:**

Chelsea Boswell - *Student Enrichment Officer/Carers Champion*

#### **Witney/Common Leys Campus:**

Max Wright - *Student Enrichment Officer/Carers Champion*

**Email:** [enrichment@abingdon-witney.ac.uk](mailto:enrichment@abingdon-witney.ac.uk)