

Student Carers Information Pack

Introduction

At Ayrshire College we recognise that you are much more than a student. Many students combine their studies with caring for a relative or friend and we appreciate that this responsibility can provide a unique set of challenges and barriers to students achieving their learning goals. We want to provide a learning environment that is fair and rewarding and which listens to the voices of our student carers and recognises the contribution Student Carers make to our College Community.

To make this happen, Ayrshire College will:

- Provide a learning environment that is rewarding and ensures equal opportunities to Student Carers
- Recognises and values the voices and experiences of Student Carers.
- Recognises the contribution Student Carers can make to the College by including them in the development of policies and practice to ensure an inclusive environment.
- Recognise the unique challenges and barriers that Student Carers may face due to their unpaid caring responsibilities; as well as balancing these commitments with study
- Provide support to identify and support Student Carers throughout their learner journey
- Protect the right of Student Carers to make informed decisions/choices regarding their studies in relation to their unpaid caring responsibilities
- Demonstrate a non-judgemental, flexible, person-centred and sensitive approach in identifying, supporting and reporting on Student Carers
- Adopt the Carers Trust Scotland's definition of a carer/student carer.

In order to support our Student Carers to protect their right to make informed decisions and choices regarding their studies in relation to their unpaid caring responsibilities, we have put together this information pack which brings together information and links to resources that our Student Carers will find helpful.

“ 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. ”

- Carers Trust Scotland



Going Further for Student Carers

In January 2021, the College attained the Carers Trust, Going Further for Student Carers recognition award.

This award demonstrates the College's commitment to the following:

- That Carers are being proactively identified from enrolment to completing their college course, and awareness is being raised throughout the college all year round.
- Carers are being supported to give them a fair chance to be successful in their studies and maintain positive health and wellbeing.
- Student Carer progressions are showcased, and evaluation tools are used to celebrate achievements and make improvements so that appropriate support is delivered.

To find out more about what this award means for you as a Student Carer, please follow the link below:

[Going Further for Student Carers: Recognition Award - Carers Trust](#)





Funding Support

The College has a dedicated Student Funding Team on each of the three main campuses. You can contact the funding team for advice or support by emailing your campus team, details below:

The College has discretionary funding available to support those who may be struggling financially. Any student who is facing financial hardship as a result of the cost of living crisis, particularly in the face of increased energy costs, and has a low or negative disposable income should contact Student Funding.



For support and information regarding your Student funding, please email Student Funding at the campus email account where you would normally attend:

Studentfunding_ayr@ayrshire.ac.uk

Studentfunding_kilwinning@ayrshire.ac.uk

OR

Tel: 01563 495033

Studentfunding_kilmarnock@ayrshire.ac.uk

To access the [Student Funding Team's Quick Guides](#), please click [here](#)

Scottish Government have launched a new yearly grant for young carers aged 16, 17 and 18. This grant is a yearly one-off payment of £300 for young people who care for someone for an average of 16 hours per week, and you can apply for it every year until you turn 19. More information is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

A Student's Guide to Funding can be found [HERE](#)

The Young Scot's Young Carers Package is a special bundle of treats available to all young carers, aged 11 to 18 inclusive in Scotland. It's filled with special treats to help you make the most of your free time and support you in your caring role. Best of all, it's completely free!

[Get your Young Carers Package](#)



Learning Support

If you have a support need that impacts on your learning and participation at college, such as caring for a relative or friend, the first step is letting **Inclusive Learning** know. It is important for you to make contact with us as early as possible.

A member of Inclusive Learning will meet with you to discuss your support needs and agree your Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP).



You can contact Inclusive Learning by:

-  Ticking the Student Carer and/or Inclusive Learning box on your application
-  Speaking to a member of staff when you come along for your interview to let us know you are a carer
-  Popping into Student Services on Campus
-  Letting the Student Association know
-  Emailing inclusivelearning@ayrshire.ac.uk
-  Or calling **01294 555325**



Learning Resource Centre

All Ayrshire College students are welcome to use any of these facilities.

The LRC host a range of accessible resources to help you during your studies, including:



- Computers with a wide range of software and internet access
- Printing (colour and black and white) and scanning
- Study spaces, including group and quiet study facilities
- Books, e-books and journals
- Magazines and newspapers
- A wide range of online resources
- Binding and laminating services
- iPads and laptops for use in the Centre
- Laptops for use in college

Our friendly and knowledgeable staff are always happy to help you make the most of what the LRC has to offer. They can also provide you with additional support on topics such as basic ICT skills and referencing.

Student Carers may find it particularly useful to have a quiet, learning space away from home to concentrate on their studies. The LRCs on each campus can provide you with this.

For more information on our VLE (MyLearning) click [here](#).



Mental Health & Wellbeing

Our Student Experience Team can provide you with pastoral support, including access to our counselling service. Your Advisor can schedule a one to one meeting in order to provide the support best suited to you.

We also have named contacts so you know who to contact for help — but **don't forget to tell us you're a Carer on your application** so we can contact you. There are lots of ways we can support you while you're at College, but we'll work with you to make a personalised plan and support you based on your carer statement.



Mental Health Liaison Officer - Michelle Morton

Michelle is a registered mental health nurse and supports students with their mental health needs. Michelle provides workshops, signposting and one to one support. Michelle can be contacted by email:

michelle.morton@ayrshire.ac.uk



Alcohol and Drugs Liaison Officer - Anne Kennedy

Anne is there to provide educational workshops and give advice and support to students and staff across the Colleges main campuses. Anne can be contacted by email:

anne.kennedy@ayrshire.ac.uk



Campus Police Officer - Claire Bysouth

Claire is there to support and provide guidance to students and staff. Claire can be contacted by emailing:

claire.bysouth@ayrshire.ac.uk



Counselling Service

The Ayrshire College Counselling Service is inclusive and available to all students who need therapeutic support. The Student Experience Team can refer students to the Counselling Service following an initial discussion with the student to understand if counselling is the right option at that time and/or if another support service is required.

This Counselling Service will provide you with a safe and confidential space, where you can explore and understand your thoughts and feelings. Counselling is a process in which you work with your therapist in order to improve your mental health and wellbeing, and gradually make the changes that you want in your life.

You will be allocated up to 6-8 weekly sessions, with each session being 50 minutes long. You may find that you need fewer sessions, or more, and this decision will be mutually agreed with your counsellor. You will have a dedicated time slot allocated to you for the duration of your therapy. You will work with the same counsellor throughout your sessions so that you can build up a therapeutic relationship.



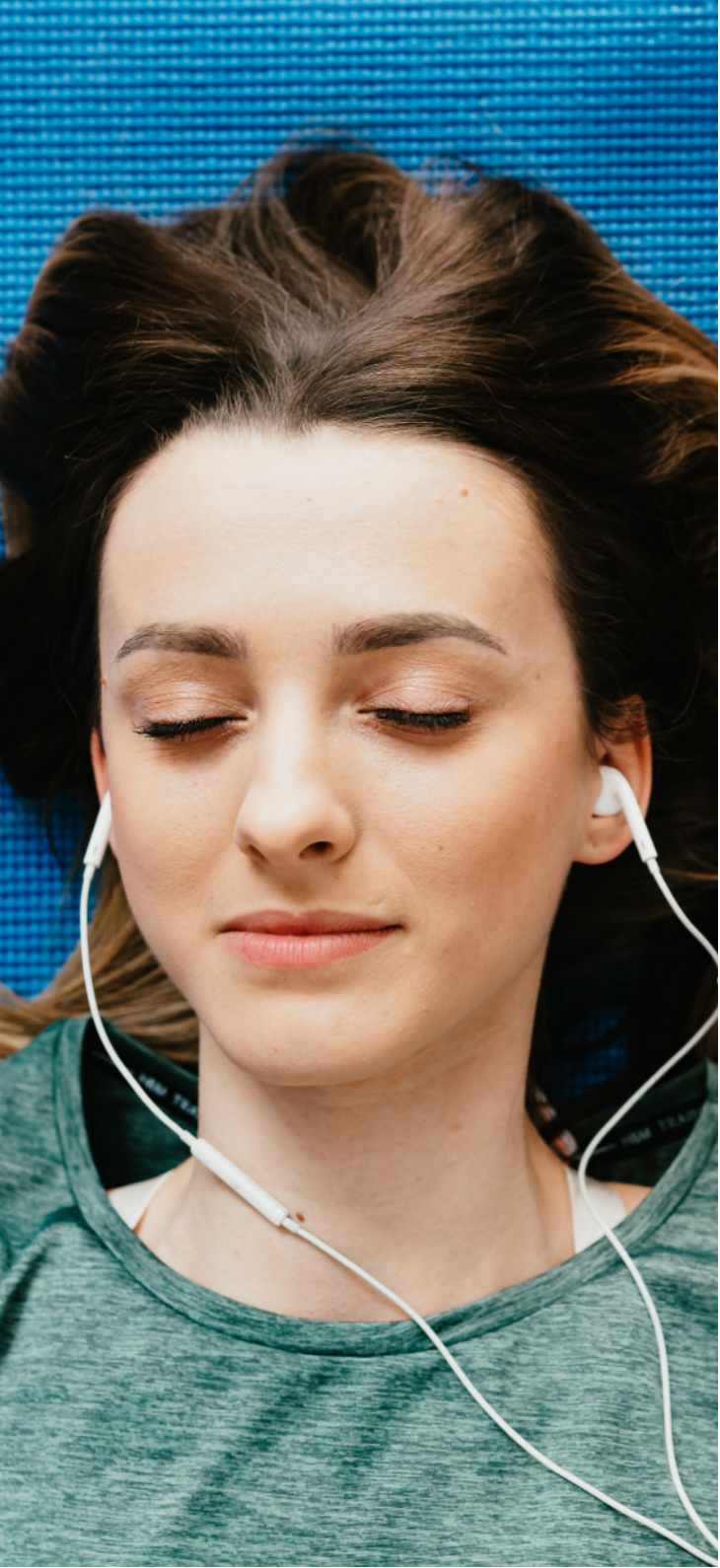
College Counselling is collaborative and will support you with:

- » A mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety or an eating disorder
- » An upsetting physical health condition
- » A difficult life event, such as bereavement, a relationship breakdown or work-related stress
- » Difficult emotions – for example, low self-esteem or anger
- » Other issues, such as sexual identity

If you experience any kind of issue that is causing your emotional pain, it might be useful to explore your concerns in counselling.

College Counselling can take place: In person - Online - Over the phone

You can choose the option that suits you best.



If you would like more information on the College Counselling Service contact the Student Experience Team:

studentservices@ayrshire.ac.uk

inclusivelearning@ayrshire.ac.uk

We would like to support you if you are going through a challenging time or have issues that would be helpful to talk about.

Ayrshire College Wellbeing Hub

All students at the College have access to a wide range of free online self-help resources through the College's Wellbeing Hub. The Wellbeing Hub contains lots of information and links to helpful websites and Apps.

You can access the Wellbeing Hub through the [My Ayrshire College App](#). You can also access the Wellbeing Hub through this [link](#).





ICT Support

Upon registering as a student, a student account will be created for you. This will give you access to your student email, Teams, OneDrive, MyAyrshire App, MyLearning and Citrix.

If you need any help or support with any of these, please contact the LRC team by email at

lrc_ayr@ayrshire.ac.uk

lrc_kilmarnock@ayrshire.ac.uk

lrc_kilwinning@ayrshire.ac.uk

OR

Call 01563 548046

Passwords can be reset following the instructions within the link (<https://www1.ayrshire.ac.uk/students/student-support/ict/ict-guides/#goto-reset-your-password>) or by calling the LRC password hotline on **01563 548046**.

Check out the College website for quick guides to accessing the systems you may need for your studies below:

[ICT Guides \(ayrshire.ac.uk\)](#)



Student Association Support

The Student Association is here to help make your journey as enjoyable as possible. We have the students' best interests at heart and will strive to provide the best guidance and support possible.

We want to open doors and create opportunities to enhance your college experience and ensure your college years are some of your most memorable years.

We can support you with issues and advice that you may face throughout your journey. From coursework, housing issues, finance, health, learning support amongst many others; we will do our best to signpost you in the right direction. You will always be welcome and greeted with a smile at any of our Student Association offices.



We appreciate that as a student carer, your free time will be limited however if you want to become more involved with the Student Association, why not put yourself forward for a voluntary position on the student Executive Team, various positions are available. Or you can represent your class and help us to gather quality student feedback by becoming a Class Ambassador. It is a great way to make new friends and feel like part of the College community.

Ayrshire College Student Association is currently developing support networks for those students who have caring responsibilities. The Student President and Vice President are happy to meet with students across all campuses to chat about issues and concerns.



The Student Association Offices on each campus can also offer quiet study and reflection spaces for students who would like a bit of time out. If you would like to use one of our offices as a quiet student space, please email charlotte.mitchell@ayrshire.ac.uk to arrange access.

The Student Association facilitates a Student Carers' Group on Teams and the link is:

[Student Carers' Microsoft Teams Group](#)

This group brings student carers together to provide support, information, to represent student carers and work with the College to improve the learning experience for all student carers.



As well as the Student Carers Forum, the Student Association support students to run various clubs and societies. At the moment we have a Wear it on your Sleeve Men's Mental Health Group, Gaming Society, Care Experienced Students Group, Accessibility Forum, Gender Equality Youth Action Group and LGBTQI+ Students Group.

Contact Us

There is a Student Carer named contact on each campus:

Ayr: Carly Boulton
01294 555325
carly.boulton@ayrshire.ac.uk

Kilmarnock: Teri Evans
01294 555325
teri.evans@ayrshire.ac.uk

Kilwinning: Sylvia Marshall
01294 555325
sylvia.marshall@ayrshire.ac.uk

You can contact the Student Association by emailing Charlotte Mitchell:
charlotte.mitchell@ayrshire.ac.uk

Useful Links

There are several agencies which support Carers and Young Carers.

[Carers Trust Scotland](#)

[Carers Scotland](#)

[Mind](#)

[SAMH](#)

[HOPE](#)

[Young Scot](#)

[Unity Enterprises](#)



External Support

The college is aware that student carers can face additional challenges in balancing their caring responsibilities with the demands of their course. Our Student Services Advisors can help you to decide on your course, plan a visit, make an application and help you to sort out your funding. They can refer you to internal support services such as counselling and Inclusive Learning. Advisors can advise on signposting to external support organisations such as Citizen Advice Bureau, Money Advice Scotland and local Carers Centres who can provide advice of support including breaks from caring responsibilities.

East Ayrshire Carers Centre

The aim of East Ayrshire Carers Centre is to create a carer led service by placing carers at the heart of the organisations and ensuring that services are effective and accessible to all carers regardless of location (rural or urban), personal circumstances or their caring situation.

7 Bank Street
Kilmarnock
KA1 1HA

T: 01563 571 533

E: admin@eastayrshirecarers.org.uk

South Ayrshire Carers Centre

Unity Carer Centre offers specialist information, support advocacy and advice for unpaid carers living in South Ayrshire. They also offer respite, health and wellbeing services, social activities and peer support.

43 Sandgate
Ayr
KA7 1DA

T: 01292 263000

E: southayrshire.carers@unity-enterprise.com

North Ayrshire Carers Centre

Unity Carer Centre offers specialist information, support advocacy and advice for unpaid carers living in North Ayrshire. They also offer respite, health and wellbeing services, social activities and peer support.

174 High Street
Irvine
KA12 8AN

T: 01294 311 333

E: northayrshire.carers@unity-enterprise.com



www.ayrshire.ac.uk

Ayrshire College is a registered Scottish charity. Reg No SC021177