

Discussion Paper: *Who Cares?: Access to Learning for Student Carers at ARU*

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Executive Officers**

Prepared for: University Students' Union (USU)

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1. Aim

- 1.1. To recommend actions for improving access for current and prospective student carers, including parents, at Anglia Ruskin University.
- 1.2. For the Students' Union and University to work separately and in partnership on these actions.
- 1.3. To discuss the delivery of these actions.

2. Background

- 2.1. This paper is written in response to and includes commitments made due to the closure of the Cambridge campus nursery.
- 2.2. The National Union of Students (NUS) have produced/contributed to several pieces of research on supporting student carers, including; *Meet the Parents*, *Learning with Care*, and *Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities: Ideas and Practice for Universities to Help Student Carers Access and Succeed in Higher Education*.
- 2.3. This research spans from 2007 to 2015, yet there are consistent patterns in conclusions drawn from the data. Useful and accurate information, finances, and data collection are common areas where institutions could improve regarding student carers.

3. Definition

- 3.1. To consider a student who has a duty of care to children, parents, grandparents, or siblings, a student carer.
- 3.2. To recognise the definition of a student carer in line with the 2014 Care Act, and the Children and Families Act 2014 as a student: "who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or child."

Recommendations:

4. University

- 4.1. Request information upon registration whether students have caring responsibilities.
- 4.2. Create a system to enable student carers to disclose their caring responsibilities easily and efficiently, if disclosure is not upon registration.

- 4.3. To complete impact assessments of their teaching and learning practices for student carers, including evaluation of how their modes of study, deadline schedules, timetable provision and styles of learning either positively or negatively impact student carers.
- 4.4. To provide detailed and accurate information about childcare provision in the local community for students with children on all campuses.
- 4.5. Commit to being flexible, sensitive, and equitable in approaches to student carers, considering particularly the extra demands on them that could affect time available for independent study and attendance.
- 4.6. Ensure that any policy relating to student carers includes clear expectations for when the institution and the individual need to take action. Also consider where existing or proposed policies will have a disproportionately negative impact on student carers and what steps could be taken to prevent this.
- 4.7. Explore how effectively the University could work with local childcare providers to secure childcare for students and present the findings to Equality and Diversity Working Group.
- 4.8. To hire a cross campus member of staff in Student Services to support students carers.
- 4.9. To ring-fence the finances currently subsidising the nursery to support future student carers.
- 4.10. Support the development of online or in-person networks of student carers, recognising the lack of time they have to establish these on their own.
- 4.11. To look favourably on extensions or mitigation for student carers, in line with recognition of the stress this role can cause and the unexpected problems that can arise for student carers.
- 4.12. To ensure Faculty Student Advisors are aware of the issues faced by student carers.
- 4.13. Consult with student carers on how Anglia Ruskin could be more accessible to them.

5. Students' Union

- 5.1. Commit to making events more accessible for carers, particularly looking at the times of day we provide events and the serving of alcohol at our events.
- 5.2. Ensure feedback about how the experience of student carers at university can be supported by university and Students' Union staff, and is available from the Students' Union and is distributed across the university.
- 5.3. Support the development of online or in-person networks of student carers, recognising the lack of time they have to establish these on their own.
- 5.4. Consult with student carers on how the Students' Union could be more accessible to them.

Grace Anderson, Academic Officer

USU is asked to **DISCUSS** this paper