

Student Carers

Wednesday 11 December 2024

In January 2024 the Office for Students added two groups of students with care responsibilities to their Equalities of Opportunity Risk Register: [young carers](#) and [students with parental responsibilities](#). However, student carers form a broader group that includes young carers in school or in further or higher education, and higher education students with parental or other care responsibilities. All might experience inequalities that limit progression at each stage of their educational journey. The particular challenges that young carers and student carers may face include:

- accessing a sufficiently wide variety of further or higher education opportunities due to restrictions on spatial mobility or regional differences in the availability of types of higher education courses and modes of delivery
- restricted access to academic, personal support and extra- or supra-curricular activities such as sports or leisure activities, volunteering, paid employment, work experience or placements
- increased cost pressures that may affect their course outcome
- reduced opportunities to access further study or progress into employment that is reflective of their qualification levels.

At this NERUPI event we will:

- Explore the definitions of student carers, young carers and students with parental responsibilities and the impact of caring responsibilities on student educational progression
- Hear from Professor Marie- Pierre Moreau and Dr Rachel Spacey about their recent research on the impact of caring responsibilities on students carers
- Present examples of interesting practice from NERUPI members and colleagues who are supporting young carers aged 13-18 to access higher education and students in higher education with parental or other care responsibilities
- Consider what 'care-full' higher education might look like
- Begin to identify key elements of an effective intervention strategy to support the educational progression of student carers.

◆ 09.45 Registration

◆ 10.00 Welcome and introductions

Annette Hayton, Senior Research Fellow & NERUPI Convenor.

◆ 10.05 Towards 'care-full' academic futures?

Professor Marie-Pierre Moreau, Professor in Sociology of Education, Work and Inequalities, Anglia Ruskin University.

The aim of this presentation, which draws on primarily UK-based research conducted between 2012-2024ⁱ on undergraduate, postgraduate and staff in academia, is to generate a research-informed conversation about care-full academic cultures. In this context, 'care-full' refers to a culture which acknowledges the centrality of care and values its contribution to the ways organisations, communities and nations operate.

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- ◆ **10.25 Who Cares? Supporting students with caring responsibilities**
Dr Rachel Spacey, University Mental Health Advisers Network (UMHAN).
In this presentation Rachel will share findings from the SMaRteN (UKRI)-funded project 'Who Cares?',ⁱⁱ discussing the experiences of students with caring responsibilities studying at different UK universities, across study levels and stages, from a range of backgrounds and environmental circumstances to understand how they balance the demands of their studies with their caring responsibilities.
- ◆ **10.45 Initial Question and Answer Session**
- ◆ **11.00 Short Break**
- ◆ **11.15 Supporting the educational progression of young carers**
Claudia Lusardi, Outreach Projects Manager, Study Higher, Oxford Brookes University.
Covering the themes of Programme Development, Theory of Change and evaluation approach and outcomes, including what works and what has been learnt, Claudia will be discussing the Study Higher *Young Carer Programme* for young carers aged 13-19 years that supports access to higher education.
- ◆ **11.35 Supporting student parents and carers on-course**
Lauren Huxley, Student Experience Officer, Lifelong Learning Centre, University of Leeds.
Lauren will be sharing the feedback received from student parents at her institution. and discussing the actions taken by the University as a result. She will also talk about some of the University's initiatives that support student carers such as the regular family and friends events held in collaboration with the International Students Office and the Welcome Team.
- ◆ **11.55 Discussion Session**
Building a Care-full academic culture
- ◆ **12.30 Feedback and Roundup**
- ◆ **13.00 Close**

ⁱ Hook, G, Moreau, J-P and Brooks, P. (2022). *Student Carers in Higher Education: Navigating, Resisting, and Re-inventing Academic Cultures*

ⁱⁱ Spacey, R, Sanderson, R and Zile, A. (2024). *Who Cares? - Identifying, understanding, and supporting the study, work and life balance and wellbeing of students with caring responsibilities*