Supporting Vulnerable Students through ITE Courses

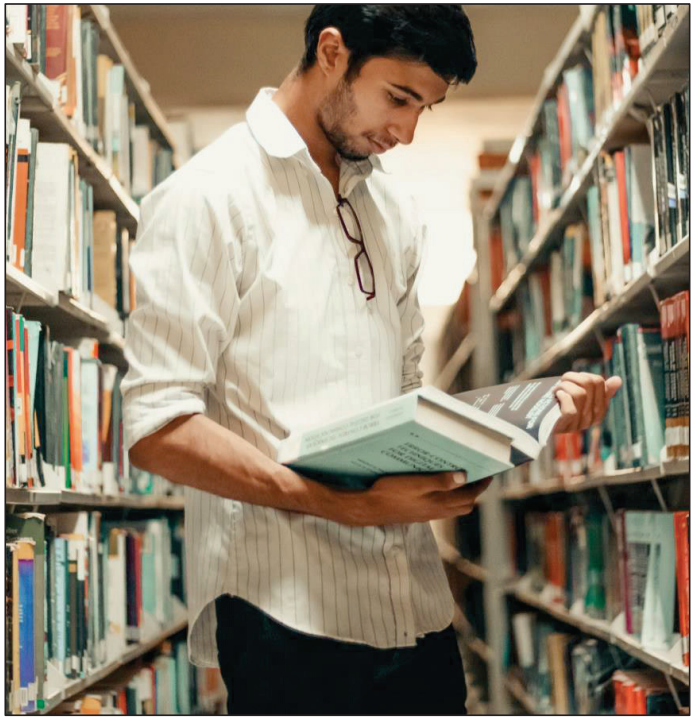
Dr Amy Porter and Natalie Rankin

University of Roehampton



Early troubleshooting

- Administrative burden – who takes this on?
- Colleague responsibilities for different stages – and associated communication
- Tracking
- Clarity over which student groups a PRAF is designed to support
- What happens if a student doesn't want to engage in the process?
- University-wide rollout in 2026/27



Workshop activity

How does your institution support students to agree reasonable adjustments with their placement schools?

https://padlet.com/natalielr/how-does-your-institution-support-students-to-agree-reasonab-mt7qbskk6nuatoou


ASK


THANK
YOU

The Roehampton University Students with Caring Responsibilities Support Initiative:

Dr Amy Porter
School of Education
amy.porter@roehampton.ac.uk

What is a Carer?

The legal definition of a carer

(Care Act, 2014)

Someone who provides unpaid support to a family member, partner, friend or loved one who cannot manage without help due to illness or frailty, disability, mental health challenges, or substance dependency (Carers Trust, 2014).



















What might a carer do?

Caring support might be physical, emotional, medical or financial or a combination (Carers Trust, 2015)**:**

- **Practical care** - cooking, housework, shopping, helping someone to communicate
- **Physical care -** helping someone out of bed, or to be mobile
- **Personal care -** helping with personal hygiene, helping someone dress
- **Medical care -** helping someone to manage and take medication including making and attending appointments, collecting prescriptions
- **Financial support -** managing the family budget, paying bills
- **Providing emotional support -** particularly in the cases of mental health care and substance misuse

A student with caring responsibilities becomes vulnerable when their caring responsibilities risk impacting upon their health or wellbeing and prospects in education and in life.

National data: caring can intersect with other inequalities to create a cycle of disadvantage

Caring is a hugely relevant but under-recognised issue. Most people will have caring responsibilities at some point in their lives. More than a fifth of the population (22%) are currently providing unpaid care (Carers UK, 2025)

Women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care than men, regardless of ethnicity or religion. 59% of unpaid carers are women (Census 2021).

48% of current carers have seen a mental or physical health condition develop or become worse since taking on a caring responsibility for someone (Carers UK, 2025)

When asked about disadvantages, a much higher proportion of ethnic minority current and former carers said they face disadvantages in relation to their finances, compared with White current and former carers (57% compared with 45%) (Carers UK, 2025).

Over a quarter of carers (29%) feel lonely often or always (Carers UK, State of Caring 2022). 48% of bisexual carers and 45% of lesbian and gay carers often or always feel lonely (the LGBTQ+ Carers Expert Advisory Group, 2022)

Challenges for student carers in higher education

Student Carers are often unable to fully engage with university activities and experience loneliness and isolation

Student carers are often unable to follow a fixed study schedule due to their caring responsibilities (Day, 2021)

Caring responsibilities can negatively impact students' mental and physical health, with student carers reporting anxiety, depression and insomnia (James et al., 2024)

The attrition rate for student carers in HE is greater than the national average (Rawlinson, 2024)

The NUS 'Learning with Care Report' (2013) found that when student carers accessed early help, it was often uncoordinated and unsystematic

Challenges in identifying student carers

Approximately 6% of students are carers, although this figure is believed to be substantially underreported (NUS, 2022)

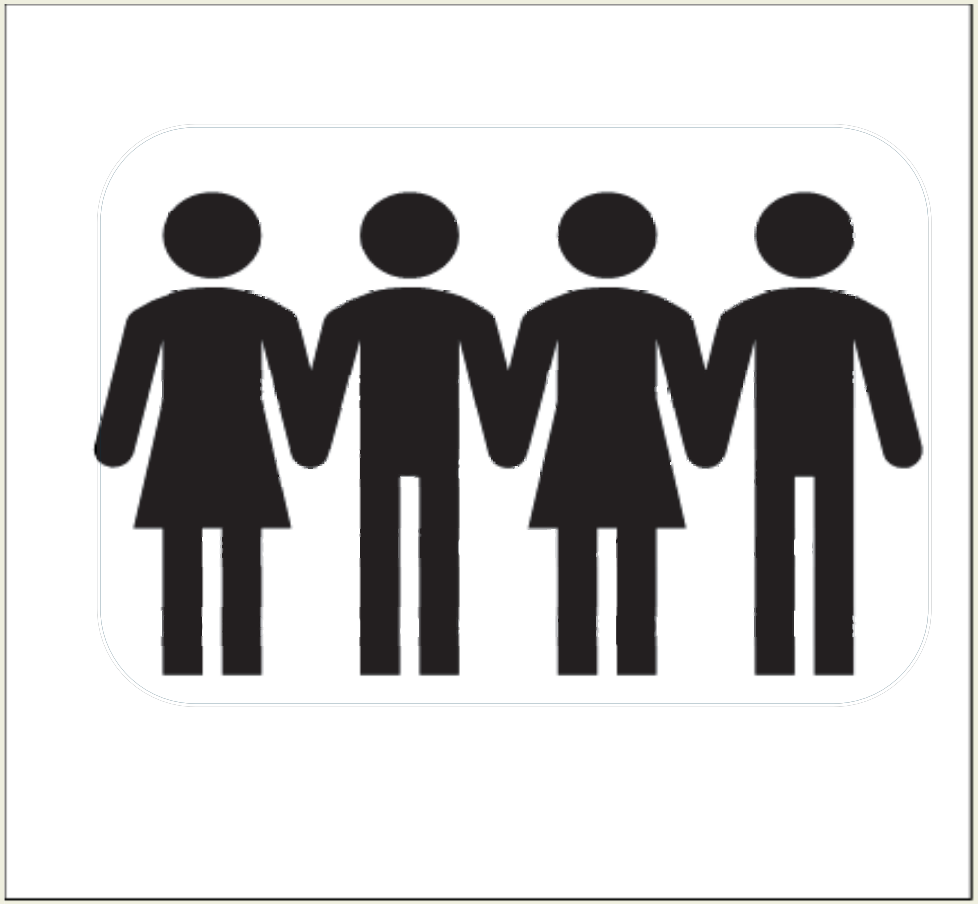
It takes on average two years for a carer to acknowledge their role as a carer (NHS England, 2014).

Some students with caring responsibilities might not recognise themselves as a carer, as the care given has been long-term and part of everyday life.

Some people do not share their caring role or may shy away from having a label attached to them (Carers Trust, 2015).

Students with caring responsibilities may have recently become carers, others will have temporary caring responsibilities, for example after an accident or at the end of life. Some will have sporadic caring responsibilities due to injury or fluctuations of a chronic long-term condition (Carers Trust, 2015)

Who are our students with caring responsibilities?





The Roehampton University Students with Caring Responsibilities Support Initiative

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Establish a social support group – pilot progamme BA Primary Education QTS	**Inclusion policy – fully integrate students with caring responsibilities**	**Establish a Roehampton University Carers' Passport**
• **Identified students with caring responsibilities** (Autumn 2024) • **Engaged with wider support from internal and external services** (Autumn 2024) • Shared Initiative at Roehampton University Academic Staff Summit (January 2025) • **Engaged student teachers with caring responsibilities** through widening participation activities, at times they can commit to.	• **Support for students with caring responsibilities to be included in the next iteration of Roehampton University's Access and Participation Plan, Widening Participation** • **Access, Continuation, Completion, Attainment and Progression**	• **Build a Roehampton university-wide, formalised 'Students with Caring Responsibilities Passport Scheme'** (Carers UK and Carers Trust, 2024)

Phase 1 Objectives – School of Education – *feedback December 2024*

Establish a dedicated support group for Roehampton University student teachers who have unpaid caring responsibilities, offering peer support, guidance, and resources

Barriers faced

- Balancing caring commitments during school placements
- Having to explain my situation to lots of new people
- Finding out my mum had a chronic illness during my degree
- Focusing on university work in the house
- Caring for my mother who has many health issues that stop her daily life
- Managing my mum's diabetes during university
- When my mum is too unwell to collect my sister from nursery, having to arrange her collection while at university.
- Slow to make social connections because I had to rush home

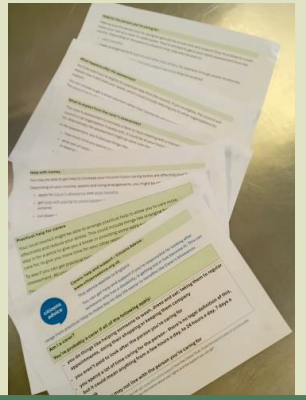




Overcoming barriers – suggestions made

- Ensuring class teachers are ready to support while on teaching placements.
- Time-management tutorials / how to manage assignments and caring.
- Extended deadlines – flexibility and automatic extensions.
- A Wellbeing Mentor assigned to you automatically.
- When you already have a SoA and mitigating circumstances, then an issue crops up and there is no extra time.







What keeps you motivated to stay on the course?

‘Passion to work with children and wanting to make a difference’

R.L. (BA3)

‘My children and love for teaching’

A.A. (BA1)

‘The chance to have a achieved a lifelong goal’

A.B (BA3)

‘To be the adult I didn’t have as a child’

D.N. (BA3)

‘Knowing that anything is possible when you put your mind to it. The achievement of a degree whilst going through things’

H.L. (BA3)

‘Wanting to set a good example to my daughter. Wanting to come out with a degree’

A.M. (BA3)

‘Supportive peers at university. My passion for teaching’

V.R. (BA2)

‘My passion for teaching and prospects for a better future for my family’

E.P. (BA2)

‘The time and effort that I already put in and the ‘light at the end of the tunnel’ – being so close to the end’

M.N. (BA3)

‘Knowing the fact that I can’t stop’

A.O. (BA1)

Phase 2 Objectives: Roehampton University policy

To fully integrate students with caring responsibilities in the Roehampton University Access and Participation Plan.

To align with the **National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education** (Higher Education Funding Council for England, Office for Fair Access, 2014) to make university provision more flexible and accessible to students with caring responsibilities as an under-represented group.

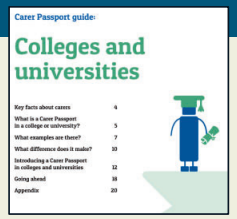
Over **80% of our students have at least one widening participation characteristic** and that:

- 64% of our students come from Black, Asian, mixed, and other ethnicity backgrounds.
- 40% of students have been eligible for free school meals.
- 60% of Roehampton's entrants are the first in their family to attend higher education.
- 27% are over the age of 21 when they start their studies and are mature students.
- 18% have a declared disability.



<u>Intersections</u>: Of the 15 students identified as having caring responsibilities on the BA Primary Education with QTS programme (24-25), 14 students are non-white/ from the global majority, 12 have a SoA for a disability, 14 are women.

Phase 3 Objectives:
Build a Roehampton University-wide, formalised 'Students with Caring Responsibilities Passport Scheme' (Carers UK and Carers Trust, 2024)


Carer Passport guide:

Colleges and universities

Key facts about carers 4
What is a Carer Passport in a college or university? 5
What examples are there? 7
What difference does it make? 10
Introducing a Carer Passport in colleges and universities 12
Going ahead 18
Appendix 20


Carer Passport application form

Carer Passport

Student carer information

GP

Person with parental responsibility (if under 18)

Person being cared for

Link to the *Carer Passport in University* resources

You can watch a video explaining the Carer Passport Scheme

Resources | Carer Passport Schemes Home | Carer Passport Schemes

A university-wide, formalised *Students with Caring Responsibilities Passport Scheme* fulfils 5 purposes:

1. **Identification of student carers:** The Carer Passport summarises the student's caring responsibilities and the impact on their academic experience.
2. **Raises awareness of caring:** The process of acquiring a Carer Passport and the subsequent support makes student carers feel noticed and valued and gives student carers a voice.
3. **A pathway to Wellbeing Services for strategic wellbeing support:** To have the Carer Passport agreed, the student must have a one-to-one meeting with a SWO, discuss their caring responsibilities and any additional wellbeing support as appropriate.
4. **A consistent, easily understandable offer of support:** An approved Carer Passport means the 'Carer Passport' Tag is added to the student profile. Once in place, the student has automatic access to 'mitigating circumstances' a two-week flexible extension period for assignment submissions for the academic year.
5. **Facilitates Communication:** Eases conversations between students and their personal tutors, academic staff, and university support services. The Carer Passport is a tool to support potentially difficult conversations.

Feedback October 2025

Thank you so much for setting up this initiative, it really helps.

BSc Web Design and Development student

Thank you so much for your kind words and support, I really do appreciate it. I'm happy to meet with R (SWO) to talk through my caring responsibilities, and it's reassuring to know this support is in place.

Primary BA Education QTS student

I am interested in meeting other people in the same situation. I would like to be involved in social groups.

MSc in Clinical Nutrition student

Thank you for reaching out, this initiative is incredibly supportive for those of us that have carer responsibilities. Throughout my years in university I've never felt supported in the responsibilities I've had outside of school, so it's truly appreciated.

PGCE student

I could really use the extra time to manage assignments this year and would honestly really find it helpful. Thank you for all the help and support you have given to me and all the carers who have spoken up, we are truly so grateful to have you advocating for us!

Primary BA Education QTS student

Thank you so much for sharing the carers' info in our Welcome meeting today—it honestly means a lot. My younger brother is autistic, non-verbal and has pica, so he needs constant care and supervision. A lot of the responsibility falls on me, which meant I missed out. This often makes it hard to keep up with assignments.
Primary BA Education QTS student

I wanted to say thank you for all the support last year and for introducing us all. The four of us made a group chat and stayed in contact over the summer to help support one another which has been helpful.

Primary BA Education QTS student

Workshop focus – Phase 3

There is an identified need, or potential to build a university-wide formalised Students with Caring Responsibilities Passport

How might this function effectively in your Programme, School, College or University?

1. How might data be collected?
2. What support should be offered?
3. How would information be shared?

Identify potential barriers to this in your Programme, School, College or University

What strategic planning is needed?

or

Student with caring responsibilities are identified and supported through a university-wide formalised Students with Caring Responsibilities Passport or similar

How does this function effectively in your Programme, School, College or University?

1. How is data collected?
2. What support is offered?
3. How is information shared?

Identify limitations or barriers in your Programme, School, College or University

How are these negotiated?

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UCET - Supporting students with caring responsibilities

UCET - Supporting students with caring responsibilities – Fill in form