

Festival of Politics

“Life is different for us, but we still have hopes and dreams just like everyone else” – that’s the message Scotland’s young carers will be taking to this week’s Festival of Politics at the Scottish Parliament.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers (The Trust) will be running an event at the annual Festival on Thursday 19 August at 11am. The event will highlight awareness of young carers, what their lives are like and the help that is available to them – such as the services run by groups affiliated to The Trust.

There are an estimated 100,000 young carers in Scotland, caring for a family member or friend who is sick, disabled, has a mental health problem or an addiction. All are different and yet all have one thing in common – they are unpaid and as a consequence often face a life of isolation, ill-health and poverty.

At the Festival of Politics, four young carers will be talking about their lives, what it’s like to look after someone for hours at a time and how that influences school and social lives. The young carers will also be talking about the positive experiences they have enjoyed through their local young carers’ services.

Nicole is 17. She looks after her six-year-old brother Paul, who has epilepsy and learning difficulties.

Nicole says: “I’ve only recently started going along to my local young carers’ group, but I’ve made lots of friends there. A lot of young carers don’t know they are young carers, so that’s why I’m happy to talk about my life so that more people know what a young carer is and why we need our groups.”

Nicole will be joining more than 450 other young carers from

all over Scotland at the third annual Scottish Young Carers Festival on 21 and 22 August at West Linton, which is organised by The Trust and funded by the Scottish Government. It gives young carers a break and the chance to talk to ministers, politicians and decision-makers about their lives and the new national young carers' strategy – *Getting it Right for Young Carers*.

Florence Burke, Director for Scotland for The Trust, adds: "We're delighted that young carers will be playing such an important part in this year's Festival of Politics at the Scottish Parliament. Spending cuts could have an impact on services for young carers which is why we want to prove how necessary the services are and how important it is that funding for them continues."