

WORKING CARERS

Employers Guide

Supporting your organisation in retaining and recruiting staff who are unpaid Carers



Who is a Working Carer?

We define a Working Carer as...

“a person in full or part-time employment, who also provides unpaid care for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addict, couldn’t cope without their support”.

Most of us know someone who is a Carer, they just might not recognise themselves as one. A Carer is someone who looks after a relative or friend who is ill, in poor mental health, disabled, elderly, affected by substance misuse or in need of emotional support. A Carer may be a parent, husband or wife, son or daughter, friend or neighbour who provides support to someone on a regular basis. In addition to providing unpaid care, Working Carers are also in employment.

This guide can help you, as an employer, to support Working Carers in your organisation. It will give you relevant information on Working Carers, and how their caring role might affect their work and productivity, and what you can do to support someone in that position. It also contains research information on Carers, and a business case for supporting employees in this position. Being a Carer can often be very rewarding, however it can be very hard work both physically and emotionally. Carers need support services that help to maintain their own health and wellbeing in order to carry on with their caring role, and we hope this guide can assist both employee and employer in that endeavour.

We Care for Carers

Carers Centres across England regularly work with employers to identify 'hidden Carers' in the workplace and support them at work. Carers Centres support employers in a variety of ways through 1-2-1 support and training, and by ensuring that their policies and procedures are carer friendly.

If you would like further info or an employee needs assistance, in the first instance, please contact your local Carers Centre on 0300 005 1213 (Durham) or 0300 030 1215 (Darlington).

Employees Rights

Carers can access certain rights at work to make caring and working easier. Below we list the legislation and rights carers are entitled to. The following list of legislation and rights, provide employees with information that may enable them to maintain a good work-life balance.

Legislation

- **The Children and Families Act 2014** gives all employees with at least 26 weeks' continuous employment the right to request flexible working
- **The Employment Relations Act 1999** gives employees the right to take "reasonable" time off to deal with unexpected situations involving a dependant

- **Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004** placed a duty on the local authorities making a Carer's Assessment to consider whether or not a Carer wants to take part in work, education, training or leisure activities
- **The Equality Act 2010** brings together anti-discrimination law acts and regulations including The Disability Discrimination Act 1995. States that employers and employees have a responsibility to create and be part of a fair work environment which complies with the law
- **The Care Act 2014** repeals most adult social care statutes including The Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970, and the Carers & Disabled Children Act 2000. For Carers this means that Local Authorities have a responsibility to provide Carer Assessments and to 'promote the well-being of Carers'. The Care Act 2014 also makes many changes which may affect the cared-for.

Carers' Rights at Work

In practice, legislation to protect Carers at work usually falls into the categories below. Many Carers access some or all of these initiatives, in order to make working life more sustainable.

Flexible working

Employees who have 26 weeks or more service can make one flexible working request per year to their employer. Flexible working can mean reduced hours, flexitime, home working, job shares, compressed, or annualised hours to name a few. Some employers will have a formal procedure, but this is not statutory, and you can also use the standard form found at: www.gov.uk/flexible-working/overview.

Employers are not bound to accept the request but must consider them and if denied must give reasons as to why the request was refused. The employee can then appeal if they feel it is appropriate. The employer has 3 months in which to respond to the request formally.

Time off for dependants

Employees have the right to take a reasonable amount of time off to deal with emergencies involving a dependant. A dependant is defined as someone who depends on an employee for care.

There is no limit to the number of times you take time off, however, whether this is unpaid or paid time off is at the employers discretion. Time off for dependants is for emergency use only, and not for pre-planned occurrences.

Parental leave

Employees will qualify for this if they have worked for the employer for at least one year and you have legal parental responsibility for a child under five, or a disabled child under 18 years of age.

You can take up to 18 weeks' leave for each child, up until their 18th birthday. A maximum of four weeks can be taken in one year for each qualifying child. Parental leave is unpaid unless contracts say otherwise. Employers may have extended parental leave to include other workers, for example foster carers, grandparents or employees who have been employed for less than a year.

Protection from discrimination

Under the Equality Act 2010, people who look after another person who is elderly or disabled are protected against direct discrimination or harassment. Carers are protected by law as they are classed as being 'associated' with someone who has special protection from discrimination. For instance, in the world of work,

it would be direct discrimination to refuse a job offer based on the fact you are a Carer, or to deny an employee promotion because the employer feels your caring role could hinder your work.

Carer Assessments from your local authority

The Care Act came into operation in April 2015, and gives Carers additional rights. The Act means that local authorities must provide Carer's assessments to all Carers. Previously Carers with only what the authority deemed 'regular and substantial' care were able to receive support. Now, it is acknowledged that caring comes in many forms, and each Carer is an individual. Assessments look into the wellbeing of Carers, endeavouring to help fulfil the needs of their own lives and balancing it with their caring roles. This might be to continue working, or studying, or simply to be able to socialise with friends and family. Local authorities can, if they wish, arrange for other organisations to carry out assessments, therefore you may find your local Carers Centre undertaking assessments on behalf of the council. There will be eligibility criteria for support, set nationally, meaning that Carers across the country, are treated the same. Whilst Carers Assessments will not be relevant for an employment setting, they may make Working Carers roles easier.

The Carer Passport

A Carers Passport is essentially a record which identifies a Carer in some way and leads to provision of support, services or other benefits in response. Visit www.carerspassports.uk for more information.

Employee support & assistance packages

Employee assistance schemes at work might help employees, these can often provide counselling services, and advice lines, which may provide some support. www.employersforcarers.org offers training and advice to support Working Carers.

Trade Unions

Trade unions can provide support, and are allowed to attend meetings with employers. A list of trade unions can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-list-of-active-trade-unions-official-list-and-schedule. Several trade unions have provided support to the charter including Unison and the GMB.

Employing Carers

What is the business case for your organisation?

We realise any type of enterprise, whether private, public or not-for-profit has outcomes to achieve and targets to meet, and that it is important to look into the business case for supporting Carers. The research provides an honest look at the many complex issues that face employers and helps dispel the myths surrounding employing Carers.

Many organisations have produced reports on the role of Working Carers and the business benefits to supporting staff. Here we will look at the key facts of supporting Carers, and will provide links to full research should you wish to know more.

The effect of caring

- The 2011 census identified 5.8 million people providing unpaid care in England and Wales in 2011, approximately one 10th of the population, 3 million of which are Working Carers.
- Due to an ageing population the need to provide unpaid care is set to more than double in the next 30 years.
- By 2017, the UK will reach a point where the number of older people needing care, will outweigh the number of potential working-age family members available to provide unpaid support and care.

- Fewer younger people are entering the workplace, and later retirement ages means we have an ageing workforce.
- We already know 90% of Carers are over 30+ - some of who are already caring for young children.
- Public sector budget are being cut and there will be further pressure to care for family and friends.

Caring & Health

- We know anecdotally that caring takes a huge toll on Carers, and one report suggests that the risk of psychological distress for Carers is 20% - 70% higher than non-carers.
- The 2011 Census also cited evidence of a link between people providing unpaid care and an increased risk of psychological stress.

Retention & Recruitment

- Carers leaving work to care resulted in an unwanted loss of talent. Most Carers who left work to care were around the 50-64 age range meaning employers have invested substantial costs in training and development.
- In one report, 44% of Working Carers had reduced their hours to manage their caring role.
- 32% had refused a promotion or had remained in a role for which they are less qualified, or one which doesn't stretch them professionally, in order to manage their caring role.
- 2.3 million people have given up work for caring, and nearly 3 million have reduced hours.

- Employers report a loss to culture and further lost opportunities to mentor and help develop other employees.
- Carers state the two most important factors in their decision to leave work are workplace support and external care services.
- The Corporate Leadership Council say the cumulative cost of an employee leaving work amount to the employee's last salary.
- The Hay Group states that any employee could cost between from 50 - 150% of the leaving employee's salary.

Productivity, Sickness & Absence

- Sickness levels across all organisations affect the bottom line and the culture of an organisation. The cost of absenteeism in public and private sector organisations in the UK has been estimated by the CBI as £14 billion in 2013.
- The combined impact of staff turnover, absence and stress as a result of managing work and caring roles is estimated to cost UK businesses over £3.5 billion.
- 41% of Working Carers say that their job has been negatively affected by caring, due mostly to tiredness, lateness and stress.

Employee Engagement

- The CBI states that Employee engagement is now the top priority for UK businesses.
- Businesses are now active monitoring employee engagement.

Business Benefits

In the Supporting Working Carers: The Benefits to Families, Business and the Economy survey participants were questioned on the business benefits of supporting Working Carers. Participants were from a range of businesses across all the private, public and not-for-profit sectors – both small and large.

The participants stated that supporting Working Carers had either a 'major' or 'some' benefit through:

- Increasing staff morale and loyalty (93%)
- Staff retention (92%)
- Reducing sick leave and absenteeism (88%)
- Improving staff engagement (85%)
- Improving people management (80%)
- Making team working more effective (75%)
- Improving service delivery (72%)
- Increasing productivity (69%)
- Reducing recruitment and training costs (65%)
- Producing cost savings (55%)

Research collated from

Supporting Working Carers: The Benefits to Families, Business and the Economy: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/232303/Supporting_Working_Carers_Final_Report__accessible_.pdf

Informal Care for Older People Provided by Their Adult Children: Projections of Supply and Demand to 2041 in England: www.pssru.ac.uk/archive/pdf/dp2515.pdf

2011 Census Analysis: Unpaid care in England and Wales, 2011 and comparison with 2001: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/provision-of-unpaid-care-in-england-and-wales--2011/art-provision-of-unpaid-care.html

Health Inequalities and Informal Care: www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/pubs/pdf/healthinequalities.pdf

Employers for Carers: Business Case: www.employersforcarers.org/business-case

Carer's Trust State of Caring 2014: www.socialwelfare.bl.uk/subject-areas/services-activity/social-work-care-services/carersuk/162616uk4067-state-of-caring-2014.pdf

Who Cares Wins: www.shu.ac.uk/_assets/pdf/ceir-WhoCaresWins.pdf

Supporting the UK

- Unpaid Carers are making a huge contribution to the economy, currently estimated at £87 billion a year
- When Carers give up work this results in lost tax and national insurance revenue, and increased welfare payments. It is estimated that tax and national insurance revenue would amount to £750 million - £1.5 billion per year
- It is estimated that £5.3 billion in lost in earnings when Carers give up work

How to help working carers & best practice

Carers who work closely with their employers and are able to work flexibly can reduce the negative impact caring can have. Work is a really important part of a Carer's life, and can often provide the psychological challenge and emotional support we all need. We now know how simple changes at work can help mitigate the impact on employees and increase staff loyalty, productivity and performance in the workplace.

We hope you wish to support Working Carers in your workplace, and in the first instance we would advise that you work with your local Carers Centre. There are many things that can be put into place to assist Working Carers and here we have listed some ideas. Many of these ideas come from businesses which are modelling Working Carer support, and providing best practice.

- Flexible working practices - such as flexitime, home working, annualised hours, compressed hours, shift swapping, self-rostering, staggered hours, job sharing, term-time working, part time working and flexible holidays
- In-house networking/support groups
- Employee assistance programmes
- Carer policies - some employers offer Carers' leave usually 5 - 10 days paid leave per year.

- Access to a private telephone or use of mobile
- Car parking close to the workplace
- Carer's Passport
- Line manager 'Carer Awareness' training

Essentially, employers who take a proactive approach, and encourage flexibility create a culture of trust and loyalty for Carers. We hear anecdotally of many occasions where employers have been supportive, often this means letting employees work flexibly, but it is also about allowing employees to feel supported and not isolated at work. Large employers take a proactive approach to caring and offer a multitude of solutions, whilst Carers will always need to take time off and to appreciate a flexible approach to working hours; work can be a safe space where Carers can engage and support each other, and create better employee engagement, and progressive workplaces. Employers who are supporting of Carer employees find that the employee has a more diverse and adaptable skill set that ultimately benefits the Organisation that employs them.



WORKING CARERS



Durham County Carers Support
Enterprise House
Enterprise City
Meadowfield Avenue
Spennymoor
Co. Durham
DL16 6JF



Darlington Carers Support
Enterprise House
Unit 1F
Valley Street
Darlington
DL1 1GY

Copyright © 2018 Durham County Carers Support
All rights reserved | www.dccarers.org
Charity Registration No. 1069278 | Company Registration No. 3534933