

# Managing a carer's absence

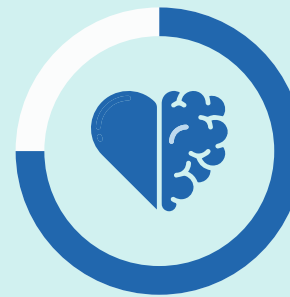


A 'working carer' is someone who has caring responsibilities that have an impact on their working lives.

These workers are responsible for the care and support of relatives or friends who are older, disabled, seriously ill (physically or mentally) and unable to care for themselves.

Research has shown that a quarter of working carers have considered giving up their job entirely because of the difficulty they experienced in combining work and care.

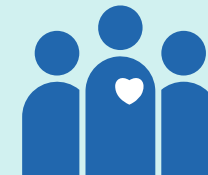
The need to provide care is likely to affect most of us at some time in our working lives.



**72%** of carers reported mental ill health as a result of caring<sup>(1)</sup>



There are **5 million** working carers in the UK<sup>(2)</sup>



**600 people** give up work every day to care for an older or disabled relative<sup>(3)</sup>



## Creating a Carer friendly workplace

Consider developing and communicating a 'Carer's Policy' or guidance. Areas to include in the policy or guidance are:

- the definition of a carer,
- the responsibilities of all parties,
- flexible working options,
- available resources (such as links to charities, employee assistance programme); and
- guidance on leave entitlements

Identifying Carers within the workforce is an important first step. A recent report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) in 2020, found a third of working Carers had not discussed their caring role with their employer.

One way to identify Carers would be to create a register that is regularly updated.

## Benefits of a Carer friendly workplace

Being a Carer friendly workplace is important from a business and legal perspective.

It can help to retain staff, improve wellbeing, reduce stress and sickness absence and associated costs.

It is particularly important with the impact of Covid 19. Many families are juggling childcare, working and Carer responsibilities and this may be the first time employers become aware that employees are also Carers.

## Examples of workplace support for Carers

- Flexible working options
- 'Carers leave' or other special leave arrangements
- Carers support network
- Access to Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
  - provision of financial/benefits advice
  - provision of counselling support where appropriate
- Information on career breaks

## Legal Considerations

- The Equality Act 2010 protects a person who experiences discrimination because they are associated with someone who has a disability and therefore could apply to Carers.
- Employees are currently entitled to time off for emergencies for dependents or for those they care for. This does not have to be paid.
- Consultation is underway to make Carers Leave a legal entitlement. A CIPD report released in June 2020 has recommended that Carers should be entitled to 5 days of paid leave per year.

## Useful Resources

[https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/supporting-working-carers-1\\_tcm18-80339.pdf](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/supporting-working-carers-1_tcm18-80339.pdf)

<https://familycarersnet.co.uk/>

[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/helping-a-loved-one/>

<https://www.dementiauk.org/get-support/looking-after-yourself-as-a-carer/>

