

Carers
First



Carer Friendly **Employers**

**How supporting carers will benefit
your business**

Who is this guide for?

This guide is to help employers to understand how many of your employees may be caring, and your legal responsibility to them. It will show you how to retain these valuable employees and how Carers First can help you.

Whether you are a small or large business, research shows that by supporting carers and using a flexible working approach, you will have better staff retention, reduce recruitment and training costs and increase productivity.

Current State of Caring

Good businesses need good people, and caring is an issue which faces all of us.

Changing demographics and an ageing population means that 3 in 5 people will end up caring at some point in their lives. An issue we cannot afford to ignore.

Carers aren't trying to take advantage, and small adjustments can go a long way, helping you to retain good employees.

Be a Carer Friendly Employer

Whatever stage you are at in recognising and supporting carers in your workplace, we can help you.

1 in 7 people are juggling caring responsibilities with work.

Carers UK: Facts & Figures

Why this matters to you as an Employer

It is estimated that 1 in 7 of your workforce will be caring for someone who is older, disabled or seriously ill. But, with the number of carers in the UK set to rise from 6 million to 9 million over the next 30 years, the proportion of carers in your workplace is also likely to increase.

Support from the workplace can help increase an employee's feelings of competence and therefore their level of interest in their work. Employees who feel valued and supported perform better at work, and go beyond their required duties.

Employers who have policies in place to support carers see improved service delivery, cost savings, increased productivity and commitment to the organisation.

Supporting Working Carers: The benefits to families, business and the economy (GOV.UK)

“Supporting carers has a range of benefits to us as an organisation including reducing turnover and keeping talented and experienced people in the Force. It is also helping us attract people to the Police and improving the resilience and wellbeing of our colleagues.”

Kulbir Pasricha, Community Engagement & Hate Crime Manager and Carer Ambassador, Kent Police



The problem for your business

Many carers reduce their working hours, take on lower paid work or turn down promotions to fit around their caring role, with 18% of working carers feeling unable to negotiate suitable working hours, and many unable to find the flexible or part-time style of working which they are looking for.

1 in 3 working carers work in professional or management positions. With it costing £30,000 on average to replace an employee, it makes perfect business sense to recognise and support carers in the workplace.

70%
of working carers have
used annual leave to care

In addition; almost half (48%) of working carers have worked overtime to make up hours spent caring. Many carers say that the leave available from work was insufficient to be able to manage caring alongside work.

1 in 7
people in work are juggling
work and care

5 million people in the UK are juggling caring with work. That's 1 in 7 of the UK workforce.

“I am trying to be a carer from a long distance and finding this overwhelming and very emotional, draining and frustrating.” Working Carer

Working Carers: Facts and Figures

3 in 5

people will become carers at some point in their lives

Every year over 2.1 million adults become carers with 3 in 5 people becoming carers at some point in their lives. Some people can become carers overnight, some more gradually – so there is a new population of carers in the workforce every day.

1 in 5

people give up work to care

Due to the significant demands of caring and lack of support; 600 people give up work every day to care for an older or disabled relative. This is a 12% increase since Carers UK and YouGov polled the public in 2013.

1 in 3

working carers are in professional positions

On average it costs around £30,000 to replace an employee (Oxford Economics and Unum) It's likely many will be amongst your most skilled and experienced employees.

90%

of working carers aged 30 +

90% of working carers are in their prime employment years, with eight out of ten carers being working age, ie aged between 16 and 65.

In the UK there are 4.27 million working carers

57% are women

43% are men



What are carers' rights at work?

Some carers may not feel comfortable speaking to their employers about their caring role. However if they do, employers may be able to provide some support to help achieve a better balance between working and caring.

The law gives everyone statutory rights. A contract of employment gives carers 'contractual rights' which can be more generous than statutory rights.

Protection against discrimination

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects carers from direct discrimination or harassment in the workplace because of their caring responsibilities.

The Act prohibits discrimination and other unfair conduct related to certain characteristics.

Parental and shared parental leave

Employees who have at least one year's continuous service and are responsible for a child aged under 18, are entitled to 18 weeks (unpaid) parental leave per child to look after their child. 21 days notice must be given. Leave can be taken in blocks of 1 week up to a maximum of 4 weeks leave in a year (for each child), or in one day, or multiples of a day if the leave is to care for a disabled child.

Flexible

working

Any employee who has more than 26 weeks' service has the right to request flexible working. This could include reducing an employee's hours, altering start or finish times, compressing working hours into fewer days or home working. Employees can make one request per year and this must be in writing advising of the adjustments needed and how this will not affect the business or organisation.

Carers only have the right to ask for flexible working, and do not have the right to be given flexible work. Employers can refuse if there are specific business reasons for doing so, but must not discriminate against carers when making requests.

"I'm so excited to tell you that my manager accepted my flexible working policy. I am so happy! I cannot wait to be back. Thank you so much for everything, absolutely life changing for me."

Working Carer, supported by Carers First

Time off

in emergencies

All employees have a right to take 'reasonable time off' to deal with unexpected situations involving a dependant. At the discretion of the employer, this time off can be paid. Taking time off in an emergency could be due to a disruption in care arrangements, to deal with an incident or accident or to make longer term care plans.



Benefits to your company

Ultimately, it makes business sense to care for carers. Not only does it reduce stress and sick leave, but it creates an open and supportive culture that helps to retain and attract valuable employees.

By opening up the conversation about caring, managers can plan and assign work more effectively, motivating staff who feel seen and heard, instilling loyalty, trust and flexibility at work.

Retaining skills and improve your brand to attract talent

Balancing care with work can be difficult, and many carers end up leaving work altogether, particularly if they do not receive support from their employer.

The peak age for caring is when many will have developed valuable skills, experience, knowledge and personal and professional networks. If a carer leaves work, their employer loses a valuable employee, as well as accumulating recruitment and training costs.

Reducing turnover and recruitment costs

The pool of people over 50, and those with caring responsibilities, is growing. Demonstrating support for carers can help businesses attract the best talent. Furthermore, as most carers aged 50-64 are female, it can support gender diversity goals.

The employment rate for those aged 50-64 who spend more than 10 hours a week caring is 56%, which is significantly lower for those of the same age without any caring responsibilities.

Going beyond your legal duty

Carers Passports

An Employer Carer Passport scheme provides a straightforward way to discuss and document the flexibility and support a business can give to enable employees to combine caring with work. It's a good idea to try and establish what your staff's caring responsibilities are, whether this be a new caring role, short term, or long term etc. to help indicate what support your staff will need. [Find out more](#)

Supporting you to support carers in your workforce

"I've worked with Carers First on a number of different initiatives and have always enjoyed the process. I have found them to be collaborative, open with communication and driven to support both their beneficiaries along with our own colleagues and customers."

As care considerations increase in the UK we're delighted to be able to turn to Carers First to help us prepare for the future."

Toby Wyithe, CSR Business Partner, Legal & General

Case Studies: Practical steps organisations have taken to support staff

Created a Manager's guide which includes tips on managing team members who may be caring and signs to look out for.

Offered the opportunity for compressed hours compressed hours meaning one member of staff could spend more time with her mum during the last year of her mother's life.

Introduced Carers leave - 5 days per year paid. Helped staff member to afford to take the time to provide care for her adult son.



Promote

flexible working

Lead by example. Remember, managers need to achieve work life balance too! Encourage staff to set their own support group or join an existing network if you have one.

Advise

working carers

- Consider introducing a Carers Passport scheme
- Ask your employee what support would help them to work alongside caring
- Encourage staff to seek support from Carers First or similar organisations

Explore

opportunities

Be as flexible as possible with working arrangements and be prepared to compromise. Having that two way dialogue with staff can help to explore benefits for both you as the employer as well as your employees.

Consult

your workforce

Be approachable and consultative. Ensure that all staff have easy access to employee manuals, intranet, staff newsletters and any information on support such as Carers First. Talk to us about training for your managers

Raise

awareness of carers

Promote a clear definition of what it means to be a 'carer'. Many people may not identify with the term 'carer'. They may simply consider they are just 'looking after' a family member or friend. Enable staff with caring responsibilities to self-identify.

Recognise

carers

Talk to us about how we can help you recognise carers including talks and celebrating awareness events e.g. Carers Week (June) and Carers Rights Day (Nov)

Promote:

Consult | Advise | Raise | Explore | Recognise

Top tips for managing carers at work

It is important for an employer to be open and clear about the policies and practices within your office and encourage staff to use them.

Without being intrusive, get to know your staff and what their circumstances are. Be as flexible as possible and be prepared to compromise. Lead by example, and remember, managers need to achieve work life balance too.



Working Wednesdays
Online Support Group
Monthly, every last Wednesday
7pm - 8pm

Identifying carers at work

Many people caring for a relative or friend do not realise that they are a carer and therefore miss out on vital support. This is why it is important for employers to encourage conversations around caring, to help staff identify themselves as carers.

Often when people hear the word, carer, they will think of people who are paid to provide care. Caring is also different to having childcare responsibilities and needs a separate response from managers and employers.

Are you a carer?

It is important that people recognise themselves as carers as there is information, advice and support that organisations like Carers First can provide. Caring for someone can affect carers own health and wellbeing too, so getting early help and support is vital.

“Most people see caring as part and parcel of life”

~NHS Practical guide to healthy caring

Most of us will care for someone at some point in our lives when someone close to us becomes ill, frail or disabled - it might be your husband, wife, partner, son or daughter, parent, close friend or neighbour.

Definition

of an unpaid carer

An unpaid carer is someone who looks after a relative or friend who due to ill health, physical or mental illness, disability, frailty or addiction, cannot manage without support.

Source: Essex County Council

Carers are employees with significant caring responsibilities that have a substantial impact on their working lives. These employees are responsible for the care and support of older, disabled or ill family or friends who are unable to care for themselves.

Source: Employers for Carers

91% of carers have missed out on financial or practical support because they did not know they were a carer. (Carers UK)

“If your situation is particularly upsetting, it’s very hard to talk about it at work because you don’t want to upset your colleagues, so in turn they may think that you are coping ok.”

Working Carer

What is it like caring for someone?

Caring can be a very rewarding experience but can bring unexpected challenges along the way and it’s vital that carers look after their own health and wellbeing too. It can be difficult to find the right support and navigate the health and social care system. But by knowing about support available this can help carers have more control in their life and better able to cope with the ups, downs and stresses that caring can bring.



How Carers First can support you

Whatever the size of your business, we can offer information, resources and support to help you and your employees who are caring.

We can help you increase your support to unidentified carers in your business, support with talks and awareness events to reach carers before they hit crisis point and work with you to tailor information to your carers' needs.

Carers First website

Carers can find the information they need at a time that suits them. From carer breaks to carer assessments, our website helps carers to understand what support is available in their local area.

Finding information is quick and easy and our support resources are tailored to carer circumstances and needs. Our website also includes local and national news, events and personal stories shared by carers we have worked with.

Free Helpline

Our helpline has friendly and knowledgeable staff to offer advice, guidance and information. Support can differ depending on who carers look after and where they live.

Are you a carer? Or do you know someone who is? If so, then tell us about your situation and we'll provide you with tailored support, or tell the person you know about us to enable them to access support available to them.

Visit:

carersfirst.org.uk

Call:

01522 782224

How you can get started

- ✔ Invite Carers First to present at a team meeting
- ✔ Promote information about Carers First in your staff newsletter or on your Intranet
- ✔ Have a named member of staff as a lead for carers
- ✔ Consider introducing a Carers Policy highlighting the support available
- ✔ Make sure your managers understand about carer responsibilities and encourage flexibility
- ✔ Mark awareness events for carers such as Carers Week (June) and Carers Rights Day (November)
- ✔ Talk to us about how we can help you

Keeping you informed

Sign up to our carers newsletter to stay up to speed with the latest news and events happening in your area and nationally.

“At Anglian Water, we pride ourselves on going the extra mile. We are delighted to be working in partnership with Carers First to make sure we can help customers get the support they need.” **Beth Kennedy, Customer Service Partnerships Manager**

Refer yourself or someone else

Call us on:
[01522 782224](tel:01522 782224)

Visit us at:
carersfirst.org.uk/get-support/

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Stay in touch

We want to hear from you and how we can or have helped you and your business.

Call:

01522 782224

Email:

employment@carersfirst.org.uk

Write to us:

Carers First
Michael Gill Building,
Tolgate Lane,
Rochester, Strood, ME24TG

“Carers First have supported several of our colleagues and have helped our line managers understand more about their staff who are carers. Not only are Carers First giving us the tools to create a supportive working environment, they are also increasing our employees wellbeing and helping us to keep them in business.”

Gaye Panther, Occupational Health Adviser, BAE Systems

Carers
First

Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future