

# Supporting Working Carers Employee Guide

## Are you in employment and caring for someone who couldn't manage without your help?

If so, York Carers Centre offers unpaid carers one to one support to stay in employment through:

- Support to obtain a Carers Assessment of Need
- Benefits advice
- Support to help your employer understand your caring role
- Support to access peer support from other carers
- Advice and information to help you access support from Social and Voluntary Services
- Access to emotional support
- Access to Carers Emergency Card Scheme

## Carers in the workplace

Currently, within the UK, 1 in 7 workers combine paid work with unpaid care, often providing over 50 hours of care each week. 3 in 5 of us are likely to become carers at some stage in our life. Sometimes carers are well supported by their employers, but there can be also be difficulties with employers understanding the impact of the caring role. This can lead to carers giving up work, when with the right support they could have remained in employment.

Many carers feel colleagues and managers do not understand the impact of caring and over 8 in 10 carers feel lonely or isolated in the workplace. As a working carer, you may need support from your employer on many different levels. This guide aims to give you information and tips on how you can effectively combine employment and caring and what your employer can do to support you.

## What issues do carers in employment face?

If you are a working carer you will probably have come across some of the issues below, and if you have you are not alone.

**81%** feel lonely or isolated in the workplace

**43%** feel colleagues and managers do not understand the impact of caring

**36%** take demotion to enable fulfilment of caring role

**30%** receive no support from their employer

**21%** of full-time working carers care for more than 35 hours of the

Sources: Carers UK policy briefing (2019); Supporting working carers: How employers and employees can benefit (2020)

## Talking to your employer

A good employer will be able to offer you support if you choose to disclose your caring role. However, this can feel like a difficult step and you may feel uncertain about doing so if you think your employer may not be supportive.

York Carers Centre can help you in approaching this with your employer and provide information and training to ensure your managers are aware of their responsibilities to you as a working carer.

An informal discussion and simple solutions often work best. For example, a chat with a supervisor may mean it is realised that just by allowing a working carer to keep a mobile switched on, stress would be significantly reduced, and job focus is increased.

## A good employer

There are numerous ways in which employers can support carers within their workforce. Having effective policies that specifically consider carers needs is key to being a good employer. Below are some examples of good leave policies:

- **Emergency Leave-** granted when a carer needs to be absent for a short period of time. It is good practice for this to be paid up to 5 days per year (more at discretion of line manager).
- **Carer's Planned Leave-** granted for defined periods of time. Paid for up to 5 days per year, or up to a month if matched with annual leave.
- **Career Breaks-** when a long break from work is required. Job is held open.
- **Cost of Dependent Care-** to enable attendance at training or to perform work duties at a time when caring responsibilities would have prevented this.

There are also other ways in which your employer could support you, such as those given below. Your employer may already have some of these support networks so it could be worth asking your line manager or HR department.



You may already have existing EAPs such as access to counselling. You could ask around to find out.



Carer Champions are senior level managers who can influence policy making and forward positive change for working carers.



Carer networks provide peer support, information and advice. They can be run on a voluntary basis or by employees paid to take on the role.

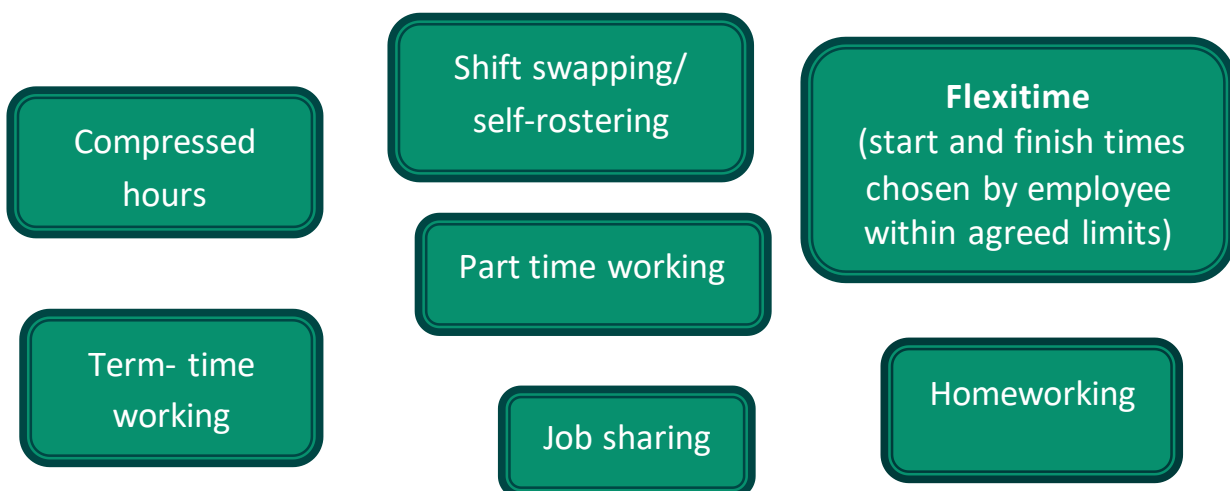
## Carer's rights at work

In addition to support from your employers, you also have statutory rights in the workplace. The following legislation applies to carers:

- **The Employment Rights Act 1996, 1999**- Right to take 'reasonable' time off to deal with unexpected situations involving a dependent.
- **The Maternity and Parental Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2002**- Gives employees who have been employed for at least 1 year and have legal parental responsibility for a child under 18 years a right to 18 weeks unpaid leave for each child.
- **The Disability Discrimination Act 1995**- Protects disabled people and their parents and carers against discrimination.
- **Equality Act 2010**- Protects carers against 'associative discrimination'.
- **Care Act 2014**- Places a duty on local authorities to consider within a Carers Assessment of Need whether a carer is able to fulfil the employment, education, training and leisure activities of their choice.
- **Flexible Working Regulations 2014 (under the Employment Rights Act, 1996)**-Gives all employees in employment for at least 26 weeks the right to request flexible working.

Employers must consider requests for flexible working seriously and can only refuse for clear business reasons.

### Types of Flexible Working:



## Benefits

As a working carer you may be entitled to benefits to supplement your wages. It is important to find out and claim what you are entitled to as many carers do not and the benefits go unclaimed.

York Carers Centre has a dedicated Advice and Benefits Worker who can help you find out what you are entitled to and also to complete the forms.

## Caring for Yourself

Balancing the demands of caring with the responsibilities of paid employment can be tough and finding time for you on top of all that can be even tougher. However, to be able to sustain commitment to both work and your caring role it is important that you plan to take time for yourself. Depending on your own personal preferences you could consider:

- Joining a gym/exercise class or using free exercise apps/YouTube.
- Attending York Carers Centre activities and day trips.
- Making time to socialise with friends regularly and/or the things you enjoy such as watching a favourite film or TV show.
- Attending support groups.
- Finding a well-being course such as Mindfulness or Tai Chi.

## Carers Assessment of Need

This assessment helps to identify what is needed to maintain your physical and mental well-being, including enabling you to carry on working if you wish to. It is also an opportunity to discuss:

- If you have enough time to yourself
- If you are getting enough sleep
- Your health and whether your caring role is affecting it
- Whether your relationships and social time are affected.

You can request a Carers Assessment of Need by calling York Carers Centre.

**To access support or further information on any of the issues mentioned within this guide please contact York Carers Centre:**

01904 715 490

[enquiries@yorkcarerscentre.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@yorkcarerscentre.co.uk)

More information can also be found on our website:

[www.yorkcarerscentre.co.uk/adult-carers/working-caring/](http://www.yorkcarerscentre.co.uk/adult-carers/working-caring/)

### **Yorkshire carers centres:**

Calderdale Carers	01422 369101 <a href="mailto:enquiries@calderdale-carers.co.uk">enquiries@calderdale-carers.co.uk</a>
Carers Resource Bradford	01274 449660 <a href="mailto:info@carersresource.org">info@carersresource.org</a>
Carers Resource Skipton	01756 700888 <a href="mailto:info@carersresource.org">info@carersresource.org</a>
Carers Resource Harrogate	01423 500555 <a href="mailto:info@carersresource.org">info@carersresource.org</a>
Carers Leeds	01133 804300 <a href="mailto:advice@carersleeds.org.uk">advice@carersleeds.org.uk</a>
Carers Trust Mid-Yorkshire (Huddersfield)	01484 537036 <a href="mailto:info@CTMY.org.uk">info@CTMY.org.uk</a>
Carers Wakefield and District	01924 305544 <a href="mailto:info@carerswakefield.org.uk">info@carerswakefield.org.uk</a>
Doncaster Partnership for Carers	01302 637566 <a href="mailto:dpfc@doncastercarers.org.uk">dpfc@doncastercarers.org.uk</a>
East Riding Carers Support (Beverley)	01482 396500 <a href="mailto:ERCarers@eastriding.gov.uk">ERCarers@eastriding.gov.uk</a>
Hambleton and Richmondshire Carers Centre	01609 780872 <a href="mailto:info@hrcarers.org.uk">info@hrcarers.org.uk</a>
Hull Carers Information and Support Service	01482 222220 <a href="mailto:chcp.carersomfp@nhs.net">chcp.carersomfp@nhs.net</a>
Scarborough and Ryedale Carers Resource	01723 850155 <a href="mailto:staff@carersresource.net">staff@carersresource.net</a>

Selby District Carers Count

0300 0120415

[selbydistrict@carerscount.org.uk](mailto:selbydistrict@carerscount.org.uk)

Sheffield Carers Centre

01142 728362

[support@sheffieldcarers.org.uk](mailto:support@sheffieldcarers.org.uk)

York Carers Centre

01904 715490

[enquiries@yorkcarerscentre.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@yorkcarerscentre.co.uk)

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