



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

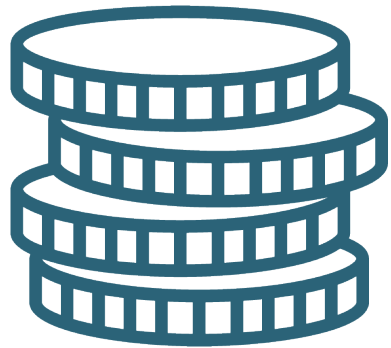
Caring for Carers A Managers Guide

*Everything you need to know about supporting
staff with caring responsibilities*



6.5 Million
UK
carers  and rising

1 in 8
of any workforce is a
carer



2.7 Million
in paid
employment



Caring is not only
an issue for women

42%
of carers are men

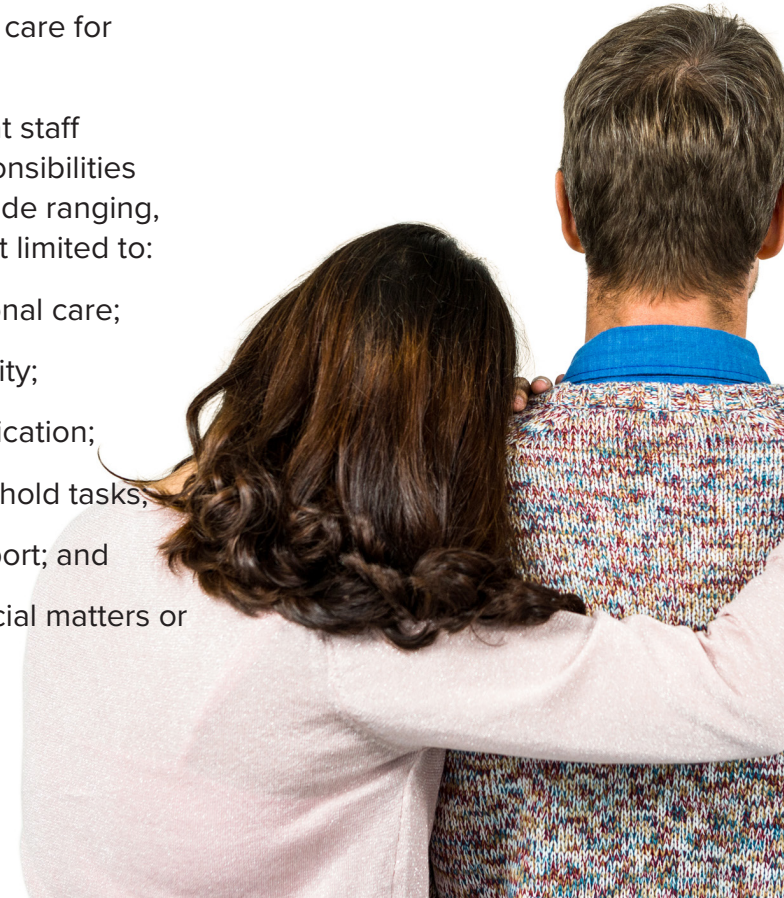
What is the definition of a Carer?

Carers are defined as members of staff with significant caring responsibilities that may have a substantial impact on their working life. A staff member is a carer if they are responsible for the care and support of a disabled, elderly or sick partner, relative or friend who is unable to care for themselves.

The activities that staff with caring responsibilities undertake are wide ranging, including, but not limited to:

- help with personal care;
- help with mobility;
- managing medication;
- practical household tasks;
- emotional support; and
- help with financial matters or paperwork.

The University also recognises that there is a wide scope in the extent of caring responsibilities and this guidance aims to cover short-term caring as well as long-term arrangements.



Beginning the Conversation

You may not have previously supported an employee who is a carer. It is important to start conversations early with employees, being honest and open in the support available to them to ensure they feel fully supported to remain in work and have a healthy work life balance.

“

I am a full-time carer when at home and am subject to sporadic caring requirements. Flexible working has become essential and I use it all the time.

Professor Ross Sibson

”

The Impact of Caring

Line managers are essential to making a carers policy work and are also likely to have an impact on a carer's ability to balance the demands of work and care. It is important for managers to recognise that every caring situation is different and each case should be dealt with individually.

Caring can impact employees in many different ways, and the information below highlights how the University and managers can support them throughout this time

Work and Caring

A survey by the Princess Royal Trust for Carers found that 47 per cent of those who had

given up work believed some form of flexible working would have enabled them to stay in work. In order to support employees the University offers the following policies.

Compassionate, Dependant and Domestic Leave

The Compassionate, Dependant, Domestic and Personal Emergency Leave Policy, otherwise known as Special Leave, entitles members of staff to take time off to deal with unexpected and stressful circumstances.

All staff are entitled to Special Leave where appropriate, regardless of length of service. This may be paid or unpaid.

Compassionate Leave may be granted in the case of bereavement or serious or sudden illness affecting the member of staff or a dependant. The University will allow between one to ten days paid leave, depending on individual circumstances.

Dependant Leave may be granted in the case of an emergency, illness, injury, incident or breakdown of care arrangements for the dependant of a member of staff. In most cases one or two days paid leave should be sufficient to deal with the immediate emergency. However, an extended period of leave may be approved due to a serious illness of a close relative/dependant. **A further three weeks** unpaid leave is available to carers following a period of paid dependant leave.

Domestic and Personal Emergency Leave may be granted up to two days paid for incidents of emergency affecting either the staff member or their home.

Flexible Working

Working flexibly can provide employees with an opportunity to continue their career, support their family financially as well as maintaining caring responsibilities.

Employees can apply for changes in contractually agreed working patterns relating to the number of hours they work, the times they work and where they work.

Examples of Flexible Working arrangements include working from home, job sharing, term-time working, shift working, compressed hours and annualised hours.

Contractual changes to allow flexibility may not be suitable for caring situations where they are likely to be temporary. Where possible managers should discuss short term flexibility, having consulted the policy first.

Employees must have a minimum of 26 weeks' service

at the University at the time of application and must not have made a Flexible Working request within the previous 12 months to be eligible to apply, unless there have been substantial changes in circumstances.

Whilst approval of a Flexible Working request is at the discretion of the line manager and considering the operational impact, the University would expect every request to be considered individually and a conversation regarding alternative options to take place if the original proposal is not feasible.

Parental Leave

The Parental Leave Policy allows parents;

A total of 18 weeks planned unpaid leave, for each child up to their 18th Birthday

A total of 4 weeks per year are allowed

The reason for arranging leave does not have to be related to the child's health and can include reasons such as accompanying a child during their first week at school, spending time with a child who is in hospital or simply maintaining a positive work-life balance.

Supporting Medical Appointments for Dependents

Often carers are required to attend medical appointments with their dependants and the University recognises the difficulties this can cause. Wherever possible, appointments should be made outside of working hours or at the start / end of the day. However, where this is not possible managers should use their discretion to allow flexibility of hours should this not have an impact operationally.



Health & Wellbeing

Carers providing round the clock care are more than twice as likely to be in bad health than non-carers. The pressures of caring can take a toll on their physical and mental health.

This impact is often exacerbated by carers being unable to find time for medical check-ups or treatment. The University allows employees paid time to attend medical appointments.

Employee Assistance Programme

Managers can refer employees to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), where appropriate and with their permission. For further information on this, contact the HR Business Partner for your area.

The EAP offers 24 hours a day, 365 days per year counselling, in addition to the following

services;

- Short-term telephone counselling support- up to six sessions per concern
- Short-term face to face counselling support- up to six sessions per concern
- Online vClub Information and resources
- Child and elder information
- Debt Counselling
- Health and wellbeing support
- Financial information
- Legal information
- Signposting to specialist agencies

Validium
TELEPHONE:
0800 358 4858
Validium Carers
Support Pack



Stress Code of Practice

The University [Stress Code of Practice](#) provides managers with a clear policy statement on stress, example indicators of stress in employees and practical advice for managers in supporting employees through stressful times. Please ensure you read this and discuss with employees any adjustments in the workplace, short or long term, which may help them reduce stress.

Carers Network

Carers often report becoming isolated as a result of their caring responsibilities.

The University Carers network enables carers to meet and socialise with other carers for peer support as well as an opportunity to feedback and shape the support the University provides for carers. Meetings are held three times

a year over lunch time and the **University encourages managers to allow their employees to attend.** For more information, please visit www.liverpool.ac.uk/working/whyworkhere/familyfriendly/carers/ Or email equality@liv.ac.uk

Top Tips for Managers

As a Manager it is your responsibility to provide support and guidance to employees throughout their career. Occasionally personal circumstances can impact on an employee's wellbeing and their work life balance. When an employee takes on caring responsibilities it is important that managers:

- Give sympathetic consideration to requests for support from those who have caring responsibilities, based on a shared understanding of the situation and its impact at work
- View the making of requests for support as acceptable and ensure that no one is treated unfairly because of their caring responsibilities
- Handle requests for support with discretion and tact
- Respect the staff member's wishes in relation to the confidentiality of their caring responsibilities.

Recognise that everyone's situation is different. There is huge diversity amongst our staff who have caring responsibilities, including the type of job they do and the level of care they provide, which may itself be subject to change very suddenly. Likewise, caring responsibilities can often span many years and managers should ensure to keep in touch with employees to review how the situation may have changed and if any different support is required.

It will be helpful to:

Discuss your employees' needs with them; this might include regular 1-1 meetings and recording through the PDR online.

Encourage staff to be open with their situation. It is difficult for you to offer support if you are not aware of what they are dealing with.

Ensure staff are aware of their entitlement to special leave / flexible working

Other important things to remember

Carers can't always plan when they need time off. They may be called away because of an emergency involving their dependent

Agreeing a contingency in case they get called away at short notice e.g. if they are on reception duty or need cover for lectures, etc – how will this be managed?

Discuss a contingency plan with your employees should they be called away at short notice. This should include how duties will be covered, particularly public/student facing roles, who they should contact should their line manager be unavailable, and what method is the best way to stay in touch.

Work can often be a respite for

employees who are carers.

Allow them to be able to answer their personal phones during working hours.

Thinking creatively about how to solve their issues.

Seeking support from your HR Business Partner if necessary.

Give advance notice if they will be required to work extra hours or travel away to meetings.



When a Caring Role Changes or Ends

Caring roles may change or end over time for a number of reasons including recovery, remission or a condition deteriorating. Regular meetings with employees will ensure a manager can provide appropriate support as circumstances change.

Whenever the end of care happens, your employee will need time to adjust and make plans for their future and they may need some extra support whilst at work. Be prepared to discuss their needs with them and offer support if possible. Throughout this time carers will continue to have the above support available to them.

Support for Managers

If you would like further information on supporting employees, approaching conversations on caring and applying adjustments for carers the University can offer the following:

Employee Assistance Programme; Manager Support line Phone through on 0800 3 58 48 58 for a sounding board on having caring conversations, supporting employee wellbeing, considering the impact of changes and employee referral to the EAP

Speak to your **HR Business Partner** for advice and guidance related to University policies

Support for Managers

A number of external agencies are available locally, regionally and nationally which can be found on the **Carers Support Webpages**.

Thank You

