

Employees guide to work and caring



ABOUT CARERS UK

Carers UK is the voice of carers.

Carers provide unpaid care by looking after an ill, frail or disabled family member, friend or partner. Carers give so much to society yet they experience ill health, poverty and discrimination because they provide care. Carers UK campaigns to end this injustice.

We were set up by carers to improve carers' lives. To this day carers run the organisation and decide what needs to be done. Carers UK will not stop until people recognise the true value of carers' contribution to society and carers get the practical, financial and emotional support they need.

Carers UK improves carers' lives through campaigning, providing information to carers and professionals and carrying out research into the impact of caring on people's lives.

Over 1 million people experience ill health, poverty and discrimination at work and in society because they are carers.

- **Poverty:** One in three people providing round the clock care struggle to pay basic food and utility bills, often affecting their own health and that of the person they care for.
Carers UK is campaigning for the government to increase carer benefits and offer tax breaks and greater opportunities to remain in work.
- **Poor Health:** 625,000 carers suffer mental and physical ill health as a direct consequence of the stress and physical demands of caring.
Carers UK is campaigning for the NHS and social services to provide adequate support, including breaks to carers to prevent ill health.
- **Employment discrimination:** One in five carers have had to give up work to care.
Carers UK is campaigning for the government to strengthen carers' employment rights and make sure services are available to fit around carers' working lives.

Add your voice calling for a better deal for carers. Join Carers UK. To find out how see page 21.



Introduction

It may feel as if your world has been turned upside down when you take on a caring role for a friend or relative. Caring can be unpredictable, it can happen overnight and often cannot be planned. You are not alone. Three in five of us will become carers at some stage in our lives, and there are currently over three million working carers in the UK. Work is important for well-being, income and to keep social contacts.

There are things you can do to help you cope with the pressures of work and care. As a working carer you are likely to need a range of support in the workplace, and often different levels of support at different times – from access to a telephone to check on the person you care for, to leave arrangements to fit in with when someone is discharged from hospital.

This booklet sets out

- your legal rights
- changes you can make at work
- how to get practical help with caring
- an application form to apply for flexible working
- information you can give to your employer about the benefits of flexible working

Carers at work

Do I have to tell my employer about my caring responsibilities?

No, it is up to you whether you tell your employer or not. As an employee, you have some statutory rights (your employer must offer these), but your employer may also offer additional support – see below for more information. Before you decide to speak to your employer, you should find out more about your employer's policy for supporting carers. Do this by checking your staff handbook or intranet or speaking to your:

- Line manager
- HR/personnel department
- Welfare officer or occupational health adviser
- Union or staff representative
- Colleagues

Should I tell other staff?

Colleagues can be very supportive, and it may help simply to discuss your situation with someone you can trust at work.

You may find that other colleagues are also carers, and that together you are more able to talk to your employer about ways in which you could be supported. You might ask your employer to set up a support group, to find out how, together, you can find better ways of juggling your job and caring.

The Metropolitan Police carried out a survey of carers in its workforce and set up focus groups to ask them about their support needs. This was led by Carers UK to guarantee confidentiality and is part of the Met's commitment to developing a culture that allows carers to be open about their situation.

Carers' rights at work

You may find that the best or only way to manage your work and caring responsibilities is to change your work arrangements. You may also need to take leave at short notice for emergencies. Carers now have more statutory rights at work that help to meet these needs. Employers may also be able to offer additional flexibility through their own policies and procedures.

Statutory rights for carers

The Work and Families Act 2006 and the Employment Rights Act 1996 give working carers rights to help them manage work and caring including the right to request flexible work and leave entitlement. (In Northern Ireland they are called The Work and Families (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996)

These rights apply to employees. Your employment status can affect your entitlement to statutory rights. If, for example, you are self employed, on a short-term contract or employed through an agency you may not be covered by these rights. If this applies to you it is important to seek advice from ACAS on 08457 47 47 47.

Flexible working

Flexible working patterns can allow employees to manage both work and their caring responsibilities. Flexible working could include:

- Flexible starting and finishing hours
- Compressed working hours e.g. work a 35 hour week over four days instead of five
- Annualised working hours e.g. your hours are calculated over a year and you work some fixed shifts, but have flexibility over some of your hours to allow you to work more or less hours to accommodate your caring role and the needs of the business
- Term-time working
- Job sharing and part time working
- Homeworking or teleworking

Example of annualised hours: Colin works in a call centre and also cares for his wife who has been diagnosed with manic depression. Colin's wife's condition is such that her need for support varies; some months she needs very little looking after, other months she needs someone to be with

almost all the time to make sure she is safe. Colin asks to work annualised hours so that he has some flexibility to meet her needs but can carry on working. This is agreed, and from the 2080 hours a year he must work, Colin has a set pattern of work for 1040 hours (20 hours a week). The remaining hours he agrees on a monthly basis with his employer; during the months his wife is well, he works extra hours, when she is unwell, he reduces his hours.

Example of compressed hours: Diane works as a sales assistant and is also a carer for her husband who has cystic fibrosis. Her husband currently receives care from social services for three days a week, and his sister looks after him for one day a week. Diane asks to work her 30 hour week in 4 days instead of 5 (compressed hours) to enable her to look after her husband for the rest of the week.

Who has the right to request flexible working?

You have the right to request flexible working if you are an employee with 26 weeks continuous employment at the date you make an application, and you are

- a parent with a child(ren) under 6 or a disabled child(ren) under 18 or
- a carer – to qualify as a carer under the legislation, you must be, or expect to be, caring for a spouse, partner (who you live with), civil partner or relative, or live at the same address as the adult in need of care. 'Relative' includes parents, parent-in-law, adult child, adopted adult child, siblings (including those who are in-laws), uncles, aunts or grandparents and step-relatives

The law gives you the right to make one application per year for flexible working. However, your employer may be sympathetic if you find your circumstances have changed and you need to make a further application.

Note that if your request is granted, the change to your working pattern will usually mean a permanent change to your contract, unless you agree otherwise e.g. a trial period or time-limited change.

Example: Barry works full time as an account manager for a large company and also cares for his son who has learning disabilities. Barry has a 1½ hour journey to and from work and is finding the long days very hard to cope with on top of his caring responsibilities. Barry makes a request to work 3 days a week from home. He and his manager work out how they can set up all the systems he needs from home so that office-based staff will be able to contact him easily, and that most of the work he does can be done remotely. He will also still be able to attend meetings etc. on the

days he is in the office and can be flexible about moving his 'home work days' if necessary.

How do I make a request?

The request to work flexibly must be made in writing and dated and should include

- confirmation that you are eligible i.e. that you are a carer
- an outline of the working pattern you would like
- an explanation of the effect, if any, you think the proposed change might have on your job and, how you think this could be dealt with. For example, that a colleague could be trained to take on additional tasks
- the date on which you would like the proposed change to start
- whether you have made a previous request to your employer and, if so, the date of that request

Your employer may have a standard form for you to use, or you could use the form on P18 of this booklet. There is also a red pull-out section in the middle of this booklet called 'Guidance for employers', which we suggest you give to your employer as part of your application. This includes additional information on flexible working and how it could offer significant benefits for your employer's business.

What evidence of caring is required?

- You are not required to prove the caring relationship but it may help your application to give as much information as possible
- 'Caring' in this context includes not just personal care but also, for example, emotional support, keeping the cared for person company, helping with financial matters or paperwork, escorting them to medical appointments.

When can I make a request?

You can make a request at any time as long as you meet all the eligibility criteria. It's best to make the request as soon as possible as the application process can be lengthy.

Application process

Employer receives the application

within 28 days the employer must agree in writing to the request or arrange a meeting to discuss it

Meeting is held*

within 14 days the employer must notify you of the decision in writing

If the request is rejected

within 14 days of notification you can appeal in writing

The employer receives the appeal

within 14 days the employer must arrange an appeal meeting*

Appeal meeting is held*

within 14 days the employer must send you written notification of the decision

*You can take a colleague to the meeting with you

Can my employer refuse my request?

Your employer can only refuse your request if they have good business reasons for it. It is important to consider the needs of your company when you make your request, and to include as much information as you can about how your proposed change will help the business as well as you, or how you can deal with any possible negative impact you think your employer may be concerned about. This will help you and your employer have a productive discussion about how your request can work. For more information about how flexible working can help your business see the red pull-out section 'Guidance for employers' in the middle of this booklet.

Business grounds on which your employer can refuse the application are:

- Burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes

Example of appeal: Alice works full time as a receptionist and also looks after her mother who has dementia. To ensure she is able to take her mother to a day service and pick her up again at the end of the day, Alice asks to reduce her hours and work shorter days. At a meeting to discuss the request, Alice's employer raised concerns about the change, saying that reception needs to be covered at all times. Following the meeting, Alice's request is refused on the grounds that the company cannot afford to recruit a job share. Alice appealed the decision and in a further meeting demonstrated that the hours she would be working were the busiest time of the day, when two people are needed, and so the workload would be manageable during the times that the other receptionist would be alone. She also suggested that another member of staff could be trained up to do some of her tasks, which would cost less than recruiting a new member of staff. Her request was allowed following the appeal meeting.

What can I do if my request is refused at appeal?

You may be able to take further action if your appeal is unsuccessful, provided you feel that

- the process was not followed correctly
- proper consideration was not given to (some of) the facts of your case
- you have been discriminated against in some way

If this is the case, seek legal advice.

The right to time off in emergencies

Also known as time off for dependants, this gives all employees the right to take a 'reasonable' amount of time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. Whether the time off is paid or not is at the discretion of the employer.

A dependant could be mother, father, son, daughter, parent or anyone who lives with you and is solely dependent on you.

An emergency could be:

- A disruption or breakdown in care arrangements
- The death of a dependant
- If a dependant falls ill or has been assaulted
- To make longer term arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured (but not to provide long term care yourself)

To use this right to time off, employees must inform their employer as soon as possible after the emergency has happened.

This right can also give you some protection from victimisation and dismissal. If you think you have been treated unfavourably because of using this right, seek further advice from your union or a legal adviser.

Parental leave

If you have at least one year's continuous service with your employer and are responsible for a child aged under five, or under 18 if the child is disabled, you are entitled to:

- 13 weeks (unpaid) leave per child to look after a child, or
- 18 weeks (unpaid) leave per child to look after a disabled child

The leave must be taken by the child's fifth birthday, or for disabled children, by their 18th birthday. For parents who have adopted a child, the leave must be taken during the 5 years from the date of placement or before the child's 18th birthday, whichever is the sooner.

Leave can be taken in blocks of a week (and usually up to 4 weeks in a year), or blocks of a day if the leave is to care for a disabled child (again, usually up to maximum of 4 weeks a year). Collective or workforce agreements may allow employees to take more than 4 weeks off in a year.

You must give at least 21 days' notice to your employer to take parental leave.

Parental leave can be postponed by employers if taking leave at the time requested would cause particular disruption to the business e.g. during a seasonal peak in work or if multiple requests for parental leave are made at the same time. If leave is postponed, employers must inform the employee within 7 days of the request for leave being made, and the leave must be granted within 6 months. Parental leave cannot be postponed if it

has been requested for the time immediately after the birth of a child or the start of an adoption placement.

For more information or advice about your statutory employment rights call CarersLine on 0808 808 7777 or visit www.carersuk.org

Organisational/contractual rights

In addition to the statutory rights your employer must give you, they may offer more support. This will be outlined in your contract and the organisation's policies. For example;

You may be able to use **leave arrangements**, paid or unpaid, at the discretion of your employer to cover intensive periods of care.

"I can arrange to have time off for hospital appointments. And if I have to take a longer period of time, for example, when Mum is discharged from hospital, I take half the time as annual leave, and the company match it by giving me paid carers' leave for the rest. This means I don't have to use all my annual leave to care."

If you are thinking of giving up work, a **career break (or sabbatical)** allows you to keep your options open, ensuring that you can go back, and keeping you in touch with the world of work. Some employers offer paid and/or unpaid career breaks, often after a specified period of service with them, so check your organisation's policies.

"If things became really difficult for me, I could take a career break and my job would be open to me when I was able to return."

Sometimes the support you need is very simple like **access to a telephone or information and advice**.

"I have access to a telephone, so if I leave Mum in the morning and she is depressed or unwell, I can call her through the day. I can go somewhere private and have a chat with her without having to worry about what's going to happen 'til I get home."

"We are actively encouraged to inform our line manager if we are caring for someone. The company offers a counselling service, and information packs provided by Carers Scotland."

What are my options if I am thinking of leaving work?

If you are thinking of leaving work, consider whether or not you really want to, and if not, what may help you stay in work.

First think about the things you would be giving up, and whether you really want to lose them

- will you manage with less money?
- do you want to give up the independence and social contact you have through your work?
- will you lose valuable skills if you leave?
- how would leaving work affect your future pension entitlement?

Then, think about ways around the problem, could you

- make a request for flexible working?
- take a career break?
- ask for extra help from social services (social work department in Scotland or Health and Social Services Trust in Northern Ireland)?
- buy in care?

Talk to your employer

Remember that employers value skilled, experienced and committed members of staff and are keen to keep them. Your employer may be able to help in ways you have not considered. Talk to them about your situation, directly or through your HR/personnel officer or union or staff association representative.

Ask for help with caring

Social services (social work department in Scotland or Health and Social Services Trust in Northern Ireland) are the department in your local council responsible for proving support for old/disabled people and their families and carers. Carers have a right to an assessment which looks at the help you need to manage your caring role.

In England and Wales, the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 says that carers' assessments must consider your work situation when looking at the help that you and the person you care for need.

Business benefits of flexible working

More and more businesses are introducing flexible working arrangements because of the real business benefits they can bring. This reflects the changing needs of both customers and employees.

Flexible working can mean a new approach to working hours, or place of work, and can be beneficial to your business for many reasons.

From 6 April 2007, the right to request flexible working is extended to include employees who care for adults. For more information about your legal duties to consider requests for flexible working and the procedure that must be followed (including time limits), see the further contacts list at the end of this leaflet or order you free copy of the Employers Pack from Carers UK produced with DTi, British Gas, ACAS and BCC – for more details go to www.carersuk.org

The following information outlines how flexible working can help your business and how you can implement it.

Carers and work

- 12% of the adult population – some 6 million people – are carers, looking after a relative, friend or neighbour on a regular but unpaid basis. 4.8 million (80%) of these carers are men and women of working age.
- Carers make up over 12% of the total UK workforce, 1 in every 8 employees.
- Approximately 10% of male employees and 14% of female employees are carers.
- Every year, over 2 million people become carers, some overnight, some more gradually – so there is a new population of carers in the workforce every day.
- Almost a quarter of all women in their 50s, and almost 1 in 5 men of this age are carers.
- 1 in 5 female carers aged 25-44, and 1 in 6 male carers of this age, provide unpaid care for at least 50 hours a week.

What is flexible working?

The term flexible working covers flexibility in terms of:

- time e.g. part-time work, shift work and
- location e.g. homeworking.

As well as the more traditional forms of flexible working such as job sharing, part-time working, flexi-time, term-time working, flexible work could also include:

- compressed working hours – worker can fulfil their total number of hours in fewer days
- shift swapping – workers arrange shifts amongst themselves, provided all required shifts are covered
- self rostering – workers nominate the shifts they'd prefer, leaving you to compile shift patterns matching their individual preferences while covering all shifts
- homeworking – workers spend all or part of their work day working from home
- teleworking – workers spend all or part of their week working remotely from the office whilst still being in contact by phone/email
- v-time working – workers agree to reduce their hours for a fixed period with a guarantee of full time work when this period ends

Flexible arrangements should comply with the law on working time.

Business impact of flexible working

Introducing a flexible working policy can benefit everyone in your business – employers, employees and their families. Many employers believe that it makes good business sense and brings the following improvements:

- greater cost-effectiveness and efficiency, such as savings on overheads when employees work from home or less downtime for machinery when 24-hour shifts are worked
- ability to attract a higher level of skills because the business is able to attract and retain a skilled and more diverse workforce. Also, recruitment costs are reduced
- more job satisfaction and better staff morale
- reduced sickness absence
- greater continuity as staff, who might otherwise have left, are offered hours they can manage. Many employers find that a better work-life balance has a positive impact on staff retention, and on employee relations, motivation and commitment
- increased customer satisfaction and loyalty as a result of the above
- improved competitiveness, such as being able to react to changing market conditions more effectively



Impact on your employees

The main gain for your employees from flexible working arrangements is the increased opportunity to fit other commitments and activities in with work, and make better use of their free time. This can be particularly helpful for people who have caring responsibilities outside work. For many carers, a more flexible working pattern may be the only way they can stay in employment.

Advantages for employees include:

- feeling more in control of their workloads
- reduced stress e.g. by being able to commute outside peak times if their start and finish times are staggered
- increased job satisfaction & commitment to the company

Impact on the customer

Flexible working hours could help your customers in many ways. You could find you are able to offer longer opening times, more experienced staff and a better overall service.

Introducing flexible working

Introducing flexible working need not be difficult, but it is important to plan, implement and monitor its introduction across your business.

Factors to consider include:

- informing and consulting staff; this should help employees to consider the question of work-life balance from your business' perspective as well as their own
- impact on current policies and procedures e.g. how will you monitor hours worked and absences, do you need to make changes to contracts?
- impact on office systems e.g. can your IT system support the change, can tele/homeworking be facilitated?
- practical implications e.g. how will you assess an employee's home environment, what equipment will you provide for homeworking, who will pay for calls and internet use from an employee's home?
- legal implications e.g. health and safety regulations, rights of part-time workers, working time regulations, discrimination law.

For more information:

Acas Helpline

08457 47 47 47

www.acas.org.uk

Business Link Helpline

0845 600 9 006

www.businesslink.gov.uk

Related websites you might find useful:

Carers UK

Guidance and real examples of the successful introduction of flexible working for carers by other businesses.

www.carersuk.org/Employersforcarers

www.acecarers.org.uk

ACAS

Information about changing patterns of work and flexible working, including a downloadable guide.

www.acas.org.uk

DTI

The DTI's employment section has a range of resources including

- Information for working parents
- The rights of part-time workers
- A range of standard forms for requesting flexible working

www.dti.org.uk

Working Families

The 'Employer Zone' has guidance on flexible working and work-life balance.

www.workingfamilies.org.uk

For more information on carers' assessments go to: www.carersuk.org/Information/Helpwithcaring/Carersassessmentguide or request a copy of Carers UK's 'How do I get help? Carers assessments made clear' leaflet.

Following a carer's assessment, social services may be able to:

- provide direct support e.g. home care or a day centre placement
- provide you with direct payments to buy your own support
- tell you about registered and approved private care facilities
- tell you about local or national organisations or groups who can help

Find out about buying in private care

If you are not able to get help from social services, or are given direct payments (instead of services) to make your own care arrangements, you may be able to buy in care services yourself. To get the help you need, you can either use an agency or recruit the help yourself.

Using an agency

Although using an agency is usually more expensive than recruiting care yourself, it has the advantages of:

- taking care of the paperwork
- dealing with an employee's National Insurance and tax
- checking references
- providing a back-up if an employee is ill or unsatisfactory

Social services should be able to tell you about care agencies in your area, or check the listings in your phone directory.

Recruiting help yourself

If you decide to recruit help directly rather than use an agency, you should be aware of the responsibilities this gives you as an employer. For example, you will need to:

- check out your employees' references carefully
- pay statutory sick pay if an employee is ill
- pay towards your employee's National Insurance contributions
- sort out your employee's income tax
- take out insurance to cover any accidents an employee might have in your home

You may also be liable to pay compensation if you dismiss an employee unfairly or make them redundant.

For more information about buying in care services, go to www.ncil.org.uk (National Centre for Independent Living)

Find out about your entitlements

You can ask social services (if they have a welfare rights team), a local advice agency or Carers UK's CarersLine (0808 808 7777) for a benefits check. This will tell you which benefits you will be able to claim and what your income would be if you were to give up work or reduce the hours you work and could help you to prepare for the change in your financial circumstances.

The right to choose

Remember that making alternative care arrangements so that you can work can create conflict and/or cause feelings of guilt. What you decide must be right for you as well as others – you have the right to choose, and that means to choose to give up work as well as to stay.

If you do decide to leave work, make sure you check all your options before you resign, for example can you take a career break, voluntary redundancy or early retirement?



Benefits for carers

If you have given up work or reduced your hours, you may become entitled to benefits, or to increase the benefits you were already claiming. There follows a list of the main benefits for carers, but the list is not exhaustive and the benefits system is very complex, so if you're not sure what to claim, seek advice.

Carer's Allowance

The main benefit for carers is Carer's Allowance. It is worth £48.65 a week. You can get Carer's Allowance if you:

- look after someone who gets Attendance Allowance or the middle or higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance, and
- look after that person for at least 35 hours each week, and
- are aged 16 or over, and
- earn £87 a week or less (after certain deductions), and
- are not studying for more than 21 hours a week, and
- satisfy UK residence and immigration rules

Carer's Allowance cannot be paid if certain other benefits (including Incapacity Benefit, State Retirement Pension) are paid at a higher rate than Carer's Allowance.

Sometimes, if you are paid Carer's Allowance, the person you care for may lose some of their benefit. If you are unsure, seek advice.

Carer's Allowance is a taxable benefit. When taken into account with your earnings, your Carer's Allowance could affect how much tax you pay. It is your responsibility to let your local tax office know that you are getting Carer's Allowance.

To claim Carer's Allowance, call the Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 88 22 00

When you claim Carer's Allowance, you may be invited to a Work Focused Interview to ensure that you are supported if you are thinking of returning to work or combining your caring role with work. Attendance at this interview is voluntary for people who get Carer's Allowance. Some carers, however, may still have to attend if they claim another benefit for which work focused interviews are compulsory e.g. Income Support.

Carer premium

Carer premium is an extra amount used in the calculation of means-tested benefits (e.g. Income Support, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit) for people who are paid Carer's Allowance, or who would be paid it if they weren't getting another benefit at a higher rate.

Income Support

People aged under 60 who have an income below minimum levels set by the government may be able to claim Income Support. To claim Income Support you must be unemployed or working for less than 16 hours a week. If you have a partner they must work for less than 24 hours a week. Your income and savings will affect how much you can get. People who can claim Carer's Allowance include carers, single parents and people who are ill or have a disability. Claim Income Support from your local Jobcentre Plus office.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Rate Rebate in Northern Ireland) are for people on a low income who have to pay rent and/or council tax (or rates in Northern Ireland). Your income and savings affect how much you can get; if you have savings of more than £16,000 you will not be able to get any of either benefit. To claim Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit, contact your local housing authority.

Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit

Child Tax Credit is a means-tested credit paid to people with a child aged under 16 (or under 19 if they are in education). You may be able to get extra credit if you have a disabled child. Child Tax Credit can be paid to people both in and out of work.

Working Tax Credit is a means-tested credit paid to people in work. The amount you get depends on your income and personal circumstances.

For more information or to claim tax credits, call 0845 300 3900.

National Insurance credits

If you do not pay National Insurance contributions through work, you will receive a National Insurance credit for each week you get Carer's Allowance, or cannot get Carer's Allowance because you get Bereavement Allowance. This credit protects your right to State Retirement Pension and

State Second Pension and may help you to qualify for Incapacity Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance in the future.

If you cannot get a contribution credit you may be able to get Home Responsibilities Protection. This helps you to satisfy the conditions for State Retirement Pension and State Second Pension. If you claim Income Support as a carer, you will receive the protection automatically. You also get automatic protection for State Retirement Pension if you receive Child Benefit for a child under 16 and for State Second Pension if you receive Child Benefit for a child under six.

Otherwise you can apply for the protection for each tax year when:

- You looked after someone for at least 35 hours a week
- The person you looked after gets Attendance Allowance or the middle or higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance
- You looked after the person for at least 48 weeks of the year

You must apply for the protection within three years of the end of the tax year. To apply, contact your local tax office.

Can I claim benefits as soon as I stop work?

In some cases, you may not be able to claim benefits straight away, as the benefit rules can allow for your earnings to be treated as income for a period after you have stopped working. This means that you may still be treated as having earnings, which can affect your eligibility for benefits. To find out whether this affects you, seek advice.

Self employment

Self-employment may offer you the greatest flexibility to enable you to manage your work and caring responsibilities, but it can also mean that you don't have the security of a regular income from work.

Whilst you have fewer employment rights as a self-employed person, self-employment should be considered in the same way as other employment if you ask for a carer's assessment from social services. You may also be able to claim benefits to top up your earnings in the same way as employees' earnings can be topped up. You will usually need to provide copies or statements of your accounts to prove your earnings when you make a claim for benefit.

For more information about self-employment go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/selfemployed

Applying for flexible working

You can use this tear-out form to make an official application to work flexibly under the right provided in law to help eligible employees care for their children or for an adult. First, check your eligibility.

These people are eligible for the right to request flexible working:

A. People responsible for:

- A child under six, or
- A disabled child under 18

and they are the child's:

- Mother
- Father
- Adopter
- Guardian
- Special guardian
- Foster parent

B. People responsible for:

- An adult who is in need of care

and they are that person's:

- Wife or husband
- Civil partner
- Partner (living together)
- Parent (including in-laws)
- Adult child (including adopted adult children)
- Brother or sister (including in-laws)
- Uncle or aunt
- Grandparent
- Step relatives as above

or

- They live at the same address as the person they care for.

If you are not eligible, you can still ask your employer to work flexibly, as many employers consider requests from those not eligible under the law. However, your employer is not under a legal duty to consider your request. Check with your HR/personnel department or line manager for further details.

Please note that it may take up to 14 weeks for a decision to be made about your request, longer if difficulties arise, so you should get your request in as soon as you can.

It is important to include in any application as much information as you can about your request and how you think it will work for both you and your employer. We suggest that you keep a copy of this completed application form. Your employer must respond to your application within 28 days of receiving it.

Application for flexible working

Note to the employer

This is a formal application made under the legal right to apply for flexible working and the duty on employers to consider applications seriously. You have 28 days after the day you received this application in which to either agree to the application or to arrange a meeting with your employee to discuss their request.

Please confirm receipt of this application using the attached confirmation slip.

Personal details

Name

Position

Manager

NI No.

Staff or payroll no

I would like to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern under the right provided in the Employment Rights Act 1996 (The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996).

I am requesting a change to my working pattern to help me manage my work and caring responsibilities.

Continues overleaf...

Confirmation of receipt

Employer:

Please complete the form overleaf, cut this slip off and return it to your employee to confirm your receipt of their application.

Eligibility

I meet each of the eligibility criteria.

I care or expect to be caring for (name)

.....

who is my (relationship)

.....

I have worked continuously as an employee of the company for the last 26 weeks.

I have not made a request to work flexibly under this right during the past 12 months.

Current work pattern

My current work pattern [days, hours, times and/or location] is:

.....

Requested work pattern

I would like to work [days, hours, times and/or location]:

.....

I would like this new pattern of work to start on: (date)

.....

Impact on my employers and colleagues

I think that this change in my working pattern will affect my employer(s) and colleagues as follows:

.....

.....

I think that the effect on my employer(s) and colleagues can be dealt with as follows:

.....

.....

I understand that this change would be reflected in a permanent change to my contract, unless agreed otherwise.

Signed.....

Date.....

Dear

I confirm that I received your request to change your work pattern on:

I shall be arranging a meeting to discuss your application within 28 days of this date. In the meantime, you might want to consider whether you would like a colleague to accompany you to the meeting.

Signed

Position

Print name

Date

Help improve carers' lives



If you have experience of looking after someone with an illness or disability, you will know it can be rewarding. But it can also be exhausting, making a huge impact on your life. Without the right support, caring for someone can all too easily take its toll on your health, lead to money worries and make it difficult to stay in work. It can be difficult to pick up the pieces when caring comes to an end.

Carers UK is here to change the lives of the UK's six million carers. We make sure carers have information about their rights and where to get help. We campaign for changes in the law and practical support so that carers can live full and varied lives where their loved ones are cared for with dignity.

You can support Carers UK by becoming a member or making a donation to help us achieve our vision of full support and recognition for every carer.

Join Carers UK

Carers UK welcomes carers, former carers and others who support our aims. As a member you will receive a free regular copy of our magazine *Caring* which will provide you with practical ideas on how to cope and keep you in touch with changes and developments to your rights. Also, your voice strengthens our campaigning power to achieve lasting change for you and all carers.

Please tell us whether you are a carer former carer or supporter

Carers UK understands that carers have many calls on their finances. There is no fixed subscription fee. All we ask is please give as generously as you can.

Please tick the level of subscription you wish to make

£10 £15 £20 £25 £30 Other

CRG/ENG/Mem/UK/Mem/320000

If you are a carer or former carer and would like free membership please tick here

You can also join by emailing membership@carersuk.org or phoning the Membership hotline on 020 7566 7602

Your details

Name [Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms]

Address

Postcode

Email

Phone

To complete your details please see overleaf.

Help us make a difference to carers' lives

Our commitment is to use your donation to run our free helpline, provide free information for carers and campaign for better support.

I wish to make a donation towards Carers UK's vital work.

£10 £25 £50 £100

or £

CRG/ENG/DonUK/FUN/310100

Payment Methods

- I enclose a cheque/postal order payable to Carers UK
- Mastercard/Visa/Switch Card no. (please delete as applicable)

Valid from Expiry date

Issue no. (Switch/Maestro only)

Amount £

Date

Signature

- I wish to pay by Direct Debit (see form)

giftaid it

- Use Gift Aid and make your donation and membership subscriptions worth almost a third more – at no extra cost to you.

Please Gift Aid my donation.

This will cover all donations I've made to Carers UK since 6th April 2000 and all donations I make in the future until I notify you otherwise. To qualify you must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that Carers UK reclaims on your donations.

Data Protection

Carers UK takes your privacy very seriously. We will not pass your details to other organisations. Occasionally we would like to send you further information about how you can support the work of Carers UK. If you do not wish to receive this information, please tick here

Please detach this form and return to:
**Carers UK, FREEPOST NAT 8132,
Crawley RH11 7BR**

Instructions to your Bank/Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in the whole form

1 Name and full postal address of your bank or Building Society

To: The Manager

Bank/Building Society

Address

Postcode

2 Name of account holder(s)

3 Branch sort code (from top right-hand corner of your cheque)

4 Bank/Building Society account number

Bank/Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account.

5 The amount you would like to pay and how often

Amount £ frequency Annually/Monthly

6 Instructions

Please pay Carers UK Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand this instruction may remain with Carers UK and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature

Date

Carers UK ref:

For Carers UK official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your bank/building society

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change Carers UK will notify you 14 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If an error is made by Carers UK or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

Further information for carers

Carers UK

www.carersuk.org
 CarersLine: 0808 808 7777
 For advice and information on benefits, community care and employment issues

Direct.Gov

www.direct.gov.uk/Employees
 For Government advice for employees, including flexible working issues

ACAS

www.acas.org.uk
 08457 47 47 47
 For employment law advice or to request arbitration. For Northern Ireland contact the Labour Relations Agency on 028 9032 1442 www.lra.org.uk

TUC

www.tuc.org.uk /
www.worksmart.org.uk
 0870 600 4882
 For information on employment rights or to find out about joining a union

CLS Direct

www.clsdirect.org.uk
 0845 345 4 345
 To find legal advice in your area

Dept of Trade and Industry

www.dti.gov.uk/employment
 For copies of official flexible working guidance

HMRC

www.hmrc.gov.uk
 Tax Credit Helpline 0845 300 3900
 For information about tax credits, tax, national insurance and self-employment

Citizens' Advice

www.adviceguide.org.uk
 For information and advice or to find your local office

Further information for employers

In addition to the tear out section for employers in this booklet, Carers UK has produced a free employers information pack. This pack contains information about the carers' right to request a change to their working pattern, and the business benefits of offering flexible working – more details at www.carersuk.org.

Carers UK

20-25 Glasshouse Yard,
London EC1A 4JT
Tel. 020 7490 8818
info@carersuk.org
www.carersuk.org

Carers Scotland

91 Mitchell Street,
Glasgow G1 3LN
Tel. 0141 221 9141
info@carerscotland.org
www.carerscotland.org

Carers Wales

River House, Ynys Bridge Court,
Gwaelod y Garth, Cardiff CF15 9SS
Tel. 029 2081 1370
info@carerswales.org
www.carerswales.org

Carers Northern Ireland

58 Howard Street,
Belfast BT1 6JP
Tel. 028 9043 9843
info@carersni.org
www.carersni.org

CarersLine 0808 808 7777

(freephone)

(free advice from 10am – 12pm and
2pm – 4pm Wednesday and Thursday)

Registered charity number 246329

Registered in England and Wales as Carers
National Association No. 864097

Publication No. UK9010

Disclaimer: The information in this booklet
is not an authoritative statement of the law.
The information is correct as of April 2007

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This work has been part-funded
by the European Social Fund
under its Equal Community
Initiative Programme.

