

## Carers in the Workplace

Policy Date	October 2021
Review Date <i>when under review, this policy should continue to be used</i>	October 2024
This policy is non-contractual	
Version <i>This policy may be amended prior to the review date to comply with any new, relevant legislation or organisational change that affects how this policy is used</i>	1
Related Policies	Managing Sickness Absence Other Leave Flexible Working Health & Safety

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1.

## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1. Havant Borough Council are committed to providing a safe working environment ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees. This includes promoting good health and wellbeing for all our employees.
- 1.2. This policy sets out the support the Council will offer to employees who have a caring responsibility, to help them balance their working and caring commitments, and continue to be effective in their job.
- 1.3. This policy aims to help recruit and retain employees with caring responsibilities.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. This policy applies to all employees of the council regardless of gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, age, trade union membership or public interest disclosure status. It also applies to part time and fixed term employees.

## **3. Definition of a Carer**

- 3.1 The legal definition of a carer is a person who provides or intends to provide a substantial amount of unpaid care on a regular basis for another individual. This could include someone who is living with cancer or any other critical or chronic mental or physical illness.
- 3.2 Employers cannot treat carers less favourably than other people who do not have caring responsibilities. The Equality Act 2010 protects a person who experiences discrimination because they are associated with someone who has a disability. For example, it would be unlawful if the partner of someone who has cancer was refused promotion because of concerns that they would be unable to give sufficient attention to the job. The Act also allows reasonable adjustments to be requested for caring responsibilities, and other legislation provides the right to a 'reasonable' amount of unpaid time off work for unplanned caring responsibilities.

## 4. Principles

We recognise that some of our employees will have caring responsibilities for children or seriously ill or disabled dependent relatives, partners or close friends. We appreciate the demands this may place on them, and that at times it may be difficult for them to combine their work and caring responsibilities.

As a responsible employer, it is our policy that:

- Managers will consider requests for support from those who have caring responsibilities, based on a shared understanding of the situation and its impact.
- It should be viewed by all as acceptable to request support and to be confident that no one will be unfairly discriminated against because they have caring responsibilities.
- All such requests will be dealt with in a confidential manner.
- Employees who require support will be provided with guidance on the options available to them.
- We will treat all employees fairly and consistently, while considering the individual needs of a particular case.
- The specific options that we will consider and management practices that we will put in place in support of carers will include:
  - Flexible working request (Flexible Working Policy)
  - If you are the parent of a child under 18 who is critically ill and therefore defined as 'disabled', you will be entitled to take parental leave – further information in the Parental Leave Policy
  - Support from the line manager in informing team members about the situation if appropriate and about staying in touch during absence and handling return to work
  - Access to relevant information and advice
  - Confidential support from our Employee Assistance Programme (which may include counselling as well as practical information and advice).
  - Information about external self help and support groups
  - Work buddies – colleagues who have been or are going through a similar caring experience.
  - To the extent that our resources allow, provision of temporary staff cover where there is a lengthy absence due to caring responsibilities.

## 5. Responsibilities

### 5.1. Employees

Employees are actively encouraged to inform their manager if they are caring for someone and need any support. In this way we can work together to ensure that, wherever possible, they can continue in their job and effectively balance their work and care commitments.

If an employee has caring responsibilities and needs support, they should speak to their line manager or HR contact and explain the situation and what assistance they think may help.

Employees may also consider applying for flexible working. The details for applying can be found in the flexible working policy.

If the employee is the parent of a child under 18 who is critically ill and therefore defined as 'disabled', they may wish to apply for Parental Leave.

Line manager and HR should invite the employee to a meeting to discuss the support options available with the employee. The meeting should explore and agree what support is possible, suitable and reasonable.

*(See EAP and 7. Appendix for further support and information)*

## 5.2. **Manager**

Managers have the responsibility to familiarise themselves with this Policy and to work within its parameters. They also have a responsibility to ensure that all employees are aware of the policy and understand their own and the organisation's responsibilities in respect of it. The Council reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.

## 5.3. **Human Resources**

HR has a responsibility to provide advice about Carers' Leave to line managers and employees as necessary. They also have a responsibility to record Carer's leave and inform payroll of any required adjustments to pay and benefits contributions

## 6. **Return to work Process**

6.1. On returning to work, the employee's line manager should arrange a wellbeing discussion about the employee's absence. The discussion should be conducted in a supportive and confidential manner in line with the return to work process found in the managing sickness absence policy.

6.2. Line Managers must complete the Return to Work form and record the absence on MyView.

6.3. Completed Return to work forms should be sent to HR Admin and Payroll.

6.4. Below is a list of external services which are designed to support carers in the workplace.

6.5. Further details on leave can also be found in the Other Leave policy.

## 7. Appendix

### **Macmillan Cancer Support** [www.macmillan.org.uk/carers](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/carers)

For answers, support or just a chat, call the Macmillan Support Line free (Monday to Friday, 9am-8pm) 0808 808 00 00

### **Carers Trust** <http://www.carers.org/>

Provider of support for carers and the people they care for.

### **Carers UK** <http://www.carersuk.org>

Offers information and support to carers. Can put people in contact with support groups for carers in their area. Carers UK have national offices for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### **Age UK** [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Offers support to anyone providing informal unpaid care to an older person through a range of local services.

### **Employers for carers** [www.employersforcarers.org](http://www.employersforcarers.org)

Offers support to employers who manage employees with carer responsibilities.

Further information concerning any aspect of this policy should be directed to Human Resources.