**CARERS POLICY – BEST PRACTICE TEMPLATE**

**Summary**

**[Employer]** recognises and values employees who have an unpaid caring role

and the contribution they make to the health and wellbeing of the people they care for. We

wish to support, as best as we are able, employees who are also providing unpaid care to a

family member or friend.

**How we define a carer**

A Carer is someone who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend

who due to illness, disability, a mental health issue or an addiction cannot cope without

their support.

**About carers**

There are around 6 million unpaid carers across the UK providing care to someone who

couldn’t cope without their support. Three million of them are in full or part-time

employment. It means that **1 in 7 people in any workplace** are likely to have a caring role.

Having to give up employment to care for someone else is a loss to employers, families, the

UK and local economies. It is crucial that we identify, involve and support carers in the

workplace setting to ensure that we provide them with the best support that we can

provide.

**Aims**

This policy aims to increase the likelihood of this organisation retaining qualified and

experienced staff who may otherwise have to leave our employment or reduce the hours

they can work for us because of the demands of their caring role. Staff who are carers will

be more likely to be able to continue their caring role and not have to give up employment.

We aim to do this by setting out clear guidelines and good supporting practices for them

within the workplace.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all employees of **[Employer]**.

**Related Policies**

This policy is fully supported by and integrated with other relevant policies such as:

 Flexible Working Policy

 Leave Policy

 Diversity and Equality Policy

 Parental Leave Policy

 Dependents Leave Policy

 Emergency Leave Policy

 Compassionate Leave Policy

**Our Commitment to Employees with a Caring Role**

**[Employer]** will support employees with a caring role by:

- Supporting and encouraging employees with caring roles to identify themselves if

they choose to

- Recognising that a caring role can begin at any point in an employee’s time with us

- We will provide regular opportunities for employees to tell us if they have a caring

role e.g. application forms, supervisions, appraisals, return to work interviews etc.

- Monitoring the number of employees with a caring role and regularly evaluating the

organisation’s response to requests for support

- Making sure that line managers undertake carer awareness training or have

completed an eLearning Carer Awareness course

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy, the challenges employees with a

caring role face and why it is important that we support staff with a caring role

- Signposting wherever possible employees with a caring role to external support

organisations such as the local carers centre

- Encouraging employees with a caring role to form an informal peer support network

- Being as responsive as we can to requests for flexible working for employees with a

caring role

- Giving staff who have a caring role a Carers Passport so that they do not have to

repeat information about their caring role to different managers or ask again for

already agreed changes to their work pattern

- Consulting with staff on the development and reviews of this policy

Once an employee has identified him/herself as having a caring role and is being supported

by this organisation the employee must notify his/her line manager if there are any changes

in the nature of the caring role e.g. bereavement of the cared for person or a change in the

nature of the caring role.

**Our Statutory Obligations**

This policy is designed to complement our statutory obligations which are outlined below.

All employees who have 26 weeks or more service are entitled to make one **Flexible**

**Working** request per year. Flexible working can mean reduced hours, flexitime, home

working, job shares, shift swapping, compressed hours, annualised hours, job sharing, termtime working, part time working, flexible holidays and career breaks etc. For further

information, please refer the Flexible Working Policy

 **[or insert details Flexible Working Policy]**

All employees have the right to take a reasonable amount of **Time Off for Dependants** to

deal with emergencies. A dependant is defined “as someone who depends on an employee

for care.” For further information, please refer to the Leave Policies

**[or insert details of relevant Leave Policy]**

All employees are entitled to have **Parental Leave** if they have worked for **[Employer]** for at least one year and have legal parental responsibility for a child.

Employees can take up to 18 weeks’ leave for each child, up until their 18th birthday. A

maximum of four weeks can be taken in one year for each qualifying child. Parental leave is

unpaid unless the employee contract state otherwise. Employees having to take parental

leave in blocks of a week, unless the employee has a disabled child when the employee can

take it a day at a time. The employee should give 21 days’ notice to take Parental Leave. For

further information, please refer to the Parental Leave Policy or Workforce/Collective

Agreement.

Under the Equality Act 2010, people who look after another person who is elderly or

disabled are protected against direct discrimination or harassment. Carers are protected by

law as they are classed as being ‘associated’ with someone who has special **Protection from**

**Discrimination**. **[Employer]** is committed to supporting, developing and

promoting diversity and equality in all its employment practices and activities and aims to

establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based on the values of fairness,

dignity and respect. For further information, please refer to the **Diversity and Equality**

**Policy**.

**Best practice areas you may wish to consider and include**

* **Carers Leave:** In addition to statutory obligations **[Employer]** will also

consider up to [number] additional days paid or unpaid leave in exceptional circumstances for employees who have caring responsibilities. This must be agreed **[insert]** on a case by case basis. For further information, please referthe Leave Policies.

**[or insert details of your leave policies]**

* **Splitting leave entitlements into hourly blocks: [Employer]** recognises

that carers need only an hour or less for an appointment, however, often need to take half a

day’s leave to accommodate the appointments. **[Employer]** allows employees

with caring responsibilities can split [number] days of their leave days into hourly blocks, meaning that one or two hours can be taken instead of full or half days.

**[insert details of the** **entitlement or your Leave Policies]**

**Support for carers you may wish to consider and include**

* **[Employer]** offer to all employees an **Employee Support & Assistance**

**Package Scheme** to support employees with everyday issues (counselling, legal advice etc.).

Details of our scheme can be found at [insert]

**[or insert Employee Assistance Scheme details]**

* As an additional **Workplace Support [Employer]** encourages peer support for carers.

Detail how do you support carers i.e. this could be an internal Carer support group and/or having Carer Champions or representatives for carers across your workforce.

* **Telephone calls: [insert Employer’s name]** understands the difficulty that some carers face in needing to be available to support their cared-for, therefore carers are entitled to have their personal phones close by and take calls if needed at work in connection with their role as a carer.
* **Staff Car Parking: [insert Employer’s name]** provides reserved parking close to the

exit of the building for unpaid carers who are likely to have to leave suddenly in an

emergency.

**Further Information**

The following pieces of legislation are relevant to Carers in the workplace.

 **The Children and Families Act 2014** gives all employees with at least 26 weeks’

continuous employment the right to request flexible working.

 **The Employment Relations Act 1999** gives employees the right to take ‘reasonable’

time off to deal with unexpected situations involving a dependant.

 **The Equality Act 2010** brings together anti-discrimination law acts and regulations

including The Disability Discrimination Act 1995. States that employers and

employees have a responsibility to create and be part of a fair work environment

which complies with the law.

 **The Care Act 2015** gives carers additional rights. One of these is that local authorities

must offer **Carer’s Needs Assessments** to all carers on the appearance of need.

Assessments explores the wellbeing of carers, the support carers need to continue

in their caring role, the impact caring is having on their own life particularly in terms

of work, education and training and quality of life. For further information, please

contact your local authority.

You may wish to ensure you know where to signpost your carers to for support. Please find below a list of useful contacts for carers in North Somerset.

1. Alliance Homes Carers Support Service

Community support for carers. We offer:

• Information and advice through phone calls, community drop ins, online support and face to face appointments

• Practical support interventions related to your caring role

• Support with referrals and signposting to ensure you’re receiving all the help you are entitled to

• Help with financial support and benefits

• A variety of groups and opportunities

to meet with other carers

• Support to understand your rights

and choices

• Support to look after your own wellbeing

• We also provide a dedicated support service for carers at Weston

General Hospital.

T: 03000 120 120

E: carersupport:@alliacehomes.org

<https://www.alliancehomes.org.uk/care-and-support-services/our-support-services/support-for-carers/>

1. North Somerset Council

[www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/adult-social-care-health/carers](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/adult-social-care-health/carers)

A Carers Assessment looks at the impact that providing care for someone else has on your own life.It is an opportunity to think about what might support you while you are a carer, in conversation with an Adult Social Care Worker. The council uses the assessment to enable you to find support and also to decide what help to provide to support you. You have a right to an assessment if you already care for or intend to care for someone. If you have already had an assessment and your situation has changed, you can be re-assessed.

T: 01275888809

E: care.connect@n-somerset.gov.uk

1. Carers UK

A wealth of information and support for carers

T: 0808 808 7777

E: advice@carersuk.org

[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

Carers Trust [www.carerstrust.org](http://www.carerstrust.org) also have useful advice and resources for carers and employers