



The Prince's
Responsible
Business Network

SUPPORTING CARERS IN THE WORKPLACE

A practical guide for employers



Royal Founding Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales
Chairman: Jeremy Darroch
Chief Executive: Amanda Mackenzie OBE

Business in the Community is a registered charity in
England and Wales (297716) and Scotland (SC046226).
Company limited by guarantee No. 1619253.

Registered Office:
137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ
www.bitc.org.uk



CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	WHAT IS CARING?	3
3	THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUPPORTING CARERS	5
4	HOW CARERS WOULD LIKE TO BE SUPPORTED	6
5	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	8
	HR AND DIVERSITY PRACTITIONERS	
	LINE MANAGERS	
6	AVIVA CASE STUDY	11
7	APPENDIX	14
	CARERS PASSPORT TEMPLATE	
	RESOURCES	
8	REFERENCES	16





INTRODUCTION

More and more employees are informally caring for elderly parents and family members – and the number is set to grow.

The ability to support and retain informal carers in the workplace is increasingly important for UK business.

This toolkit provides the knowledge and practical advice your business needs to support informal carers. It includes best practice support for carers from Aviva, a template 'carers passport' and other resources.



WHAT IS CARING?

Caring involves providing care and support to people that is not part of a paid job. Caring can include: helping a person with shopping, preparing their meals and feeding, doing household chores, filling in forms, managing money, dressing and washing, attending appointments, as well as providing emotional support.

Parents are the main recipients of unpaid care.¹ Other recipients include partners, spouses, cohabitees, sons/daughters, other relatives or non-relatives. In 2015/16, 44% of all informal carers provided care to someone living within their household and 58% provide care to somebody living outside their household.² One in four of the UK's adult population have experienced 'sandwich caring' at some point in their lives: providing care for a dependent child or grandchild, as well as an elderly parent.³

Due to increased mobility, many carers provide care from a distance. This is defined as supporting or providing unpaid care for an ill, frail or disabled relative, partner or friend who may be living in another town, region or country.⁴





What is the financial cost?

The UK currently relies on unpaid carers. Official data shows that spend on social care in England has decreased in real terms since 2010, and the total spend on social care was £17 billion last year. One in ten people in the UK (6.5 million) are informal carers,⁵ and if the time they spent caring was replaced with paid carers or nursing assistants, it would cost the UK £57 billion.⁶

A growing issue for older workers

As the population ages, the number of informal carers is set to rise from six million to nine million over the next 30 years.⁷ This mostly affects older workers because three in five carers are over the age of 50, and 55-64 is the peak age for caring.⁸

In 2015/16, 33% of all adult informal carers were in full-time employment (44% of men and 26% of women).⁹ Women providing informal care were much more likely to be in part-time employment than men. 23% of female carers worked part-time compared to 9% of male carers.¹⁰

A growing issue for business

One in nine people in your workforce are caring for someone who is older, disabled or seriously ill.¹¹ Growing numbers of employees will be taking on caring responsibilities whilst continuing to work, many of whom will struggle to balance the two effectively. Caring can be hard work, both physically and emotionally, and this can inevitably affect a carer's working life.

With fewer younger people set to enter the workplace and a growing retired population, the country is facing an unprecedented skills and workforce shortage. Employers need to make the most of the over-50s to fill workforce shortages, and doing so requires supporting those with caring responsibilities.

Employers must seek to understand and support their working carers in order to retain them in the workforce and maintain their wellbeing and productivity.





THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUPPORTING CARERS

Improve productivity: Employers who have policies in place to support carers see improved service delivery, cost savings and increased productivity.¹²

Reduce turnover costs: Balancing care with work can be difficult, and many carers end up leaving work altogether, particularly if they do not receive support from their employer. The employment rate for those aged 50-64 who spend more than 10 hours a week caring is 56%, which is significantly lower for those of the same age without any caring responsibilities: 74% for men and 64% for women.

Retain skills and reduce recruitment costs: The peak age for carering is when many will have developed valuable skills, experience, knowledge and personal and professional networks. If a carer leaves work, their employer loses a valuable employee, as well as accumulating recruitment and training costs.

Improve brand to attract talent: The pool of people over 50, and those with caring responsibilities, is growing. Demonstrating support

for carers can help businesses attract the best talent. Furthermore, as most carers aged 50-64 are female, it can support gender diversity goals.

Close the gender pay gap: Carers are mostly female¹³, so supporting them to stay in work and balance caring with progression at work can contribute towards reducing the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is largest amongst people aged 50-59, and the peak age for caring is 55-64.

Reap the rewards of intergenerational working: Helping older workers to manage their caring responsibilities alongside work enables them to continue working for longer. This can help to increase age diversity and intergenerational learning.

A workforce that reflects the age diversity of the customer base will help businesses deliver the best possible customer service, as their people will relate to their customers. They will also have invaluable insight into the products and services that will be most successful. Research by Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) found that age-diverse teams enhance customer service.¹⁴





HOW CARERS WOULD LIKE TO BE SUPPORTED

Whilst government is responsible for funding health and social care, it is crucial that businesses support informal carers to remain in work. At present, not enough support is provided, and too many carers are leaving work altogether.

- Only a third of employers (34%) have a formal written policy or an informal verbal policy in place to support carers – decreasing to only 18% for private sector employers.¹⁵
- Carers UK and Employers for Carers found that nearly one in four carers (23%) do not receive any support from their employer.
- Employers for Carers found that 71% of working carers have felt lonely or isolated in the workplace as a result of being a carer.¹⁶
- Carers UK report that over a third (35%) of carers have given up work to care and 16% have reduced their hours.¹⁷
- Only 4% of carers say caring has no impact on their capacity to work.¹⁸

- 43% of carers feel that colleagues and managers do not understand the impact of caring.¹⁹
- A survey of distance carers found that 43% felt their work had been negatively affected by caring and that they felt tired, stressed and anxious. One in ten cared for more than one person.²⁰

What type of support do carers want?

Most carers (62%) prefer an 'enabling' organisation that gives carers permission to respond as and when they need to.²¹ Only 18% of carers prefer a 'hand-holding' organisation - one that intervenes in the employees' situations.

Flexible working and paid Carers Leave can help to reduce the amount of leave taken to care.

Providing more and better information, and signposting to external support, can be extremely helpful for carers. Only 42% of the UK public would feel confident pointing people in the direction of information about caring²², so the workplace can be a crucial source of information.

According to a 2011 survey into distance carers, 44% would like more publicity about issues related to caring in their workplace.²³



Many people do not recognise themselves as 'carers' – either because they do not want that label (they are just doing things for people they love), or they don't recognise that what they're doing actually equates to being a carer.

Raising awareness of caring internally could encourage people to seek the support that they need.





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Recommendations for HR and Diversity Practitioners

Collating data and insight

- Analyse your business risk: how many carers are there in your workforce, and are you facing workforce or skills shortages?
- When measuring the number of carers, use the statistic in this report (1 in 9 workers as carers) as a first point of reference. Asking carers to come forward before securing senior buy-in for carer support may raise expectations.
- Understand the needs of carers in your workforce. Consider using surveys and focus groups. Using both allows greater interaction with carers as some may not feel comfortable in a focus group scenario and a survey can remain anonymous.

Getting senior people on board

- Develop your business case for action, including the risk to your own business and the solutions.

Setting goals that can be measured

- Goals could include improved retention, engagement, productivity, wellbeing and satisfaction amongst carers in your workforce, as well as more carers being able to self-identify.

Raising awareness

- An internal awareness-raising campaign can enable people to self-identify as carers, and increase understanding and empathy.
- Use a variety of communications channels to share personal stories of caring whilst working, policy updates and the type of support available.





Empowering line managers

- Train and empower line managers so that they are able to respond to the needs of their employees with caring responsibilities with autonomy and confidence.
- Encourage informal flexible working and autonomy in their teams. Communicate guidelines for accepting or refusing flexible working requests.

Supporting carers

- Consider whether you can provide any paid carers leave. If you can then provide this in hours. Think about what you could provide and focus on that. Even a small amount of paid leave could make a big difference.
- Create a carers portal with resources and signpost to external advisory services and local authorities. Ensure all employees can access a computer in their workplace.
- A peer-led carers network with a senior level champion or chair can encourage support between staff. Appointing a senior level person to front an employee network is vital for driving change.

- Encourage staff to become 'Carers Champions' to increase visibility of carers, create role models and promote the balancing of work and care.
- Consider providing counselling or wellbeing support to carers.
- Embed a flexible working culture across the organisation. Ensure it is seen as a business solution, and not as a benefit for certain groups.

Monitoring activity

- Seek feedback from carers and line managers to inform your policy development and improvement.
- Monitor progress against your initial goals and key performance indicators.
- Monitor changes in employee surveys among the caring population.





Recommendations for line managers

Become an inclusive leader

- Offer and encourage the same training and development opportunities to carers as to all staff, including those working flexibly.
- Ask carers for feedback on the impact of your management style.

Work on developing a 'speak up' culture within your team

- Encourage people to come forward with any issues or concerns related to being a carer.
- Challenge negative attitudes or comments towards carers.

Use and promote tools and guides

- Use the Carers Passport (see Appendix) to help you approach carers in your team, open up the conversation and find solutions.
- Promote the Carers Passport, the company policy on carers and other guides and information as part of your team communications.

Normalise flexible working in your team

- If flexible working has been signed off by your seniors, embed it within your entire team and not just for carers, so that negative stigma is removed.
- Ask for training on managing flexible teams successfully.
- Challenge negative attitudes or comments towards those who work part time or flexible hours.

Empower carers

- Encourage autonomy on the part of carers in your team, such as responding to personal phone calls.
- Enable them to make decisions about managing their work time and tasks relating to their caring responsibilities.





AVIVA CASE STUDY: A STEP BY STEP APPROACH TO DEVELOPING SUPPORT FOR CARERS

1 Building the case for action →

Aviva can see very clear business reasons to improve their support for working carers. It reduces sickness absence and improves retention and productivity, all of which significantly impact business costs.

Supporting carers is part of Aviva's wellbeing strategy. They found that taking on caring responsibilities is a stressful experience and introducing a Carer Policy helps carers to manage that stress.

One in nine people in work in the UK are carers.²⁴ At Aviva, that ratio equates to around 1,800 employees.

The Aviva carers initiative has support from senior management and is led by the Chair of the Bristol Carer's Network. Aviva drew on personal experience and emotional understanding of caring to get senior people on board.

2 Research and piloting →

Aviva used multiple methods to learn about the needs of carers and their managers.

- A pilot project in the Bristol office, to understand more about the needs of carers and their managers and inform the development of a Carers Policy.
- Engagement with employee representative bodies who were very supportive of a focus on carers.
- The use of expertise from external organisations such as Carers UK.
- A review of the questions being asked of HR in relation to carers.
- A review of policies and offerings for other groups, such as parents, to see if any could be replicated for carers.
- A survey of 1,000 consumers across the UK to understand their caring commitments.

3 The findings and feedback →

Aviva identified some key areas of focus to help carers balance work and caring.

- A published Carers Policy that is clear about the support offered and reinforces Aviva's commitment to supporting carers.
- Providing additional paid time off to enable carers to accompany dependants to planned appointments, an important part of many carers' lives.
- Providing this time off in hours rather than days. Aviva found that carers often need just a short time away from work (for example, an hour) and so may not need full days off.
- Carers said they would however value the opportunity to take a longer period of unpaid leave for the occasional times that they need to focus fully on caring.





4. Additional findings →

- Providing the opportunity for carers to provide support for one another through employee led carer networks.
- They also found they should publicise some of their existing offerings in the carers policy, for example the ability to take paid leave in an emergency, and access to a confidential external employee assistance programme.
- Additionally, they found that managers preferred training and support on specific situations they were managing in relation to carers rather than a formal training programme.

5 Support introduced for carers →

- 35 hours of paid time off to deal with emergencies and an additional 35 hours of paid time off for planned appointments.
- Information about flexible working and how it can be practiced effectively.
- Right to request longer-term leave. The four weeks per annum (18 weeks maximum overall) has been opened up to both parents and carers.
- Signposting to the Employers for Carers portal, as Aviva is a member.
- A carers and parents community made up of colleagues called 'Aviva Carers'. This global network provides the opportunity for mutual support networks, a key element of helping people maintain fulfilling careers at Aviva while caring.
- More flexibility in bereavement leave. Sadly, caring often ends in a death, and people may need flexibility and an

individualised approach to taking leave, for both practical and emotional reasons.

- Access to an employee assistance programme.
- Managers can contact Aviva's Leader Advice team as and when they need training.
- The policy does not require proof of caring as it can be difficult for informal carers to provide this.



6. Raising awareness

- Communications were shared internally with all colleagues, highlighting Aviva's commitment to carers. They included a personal story of a colleague with caring responsibilities. There was a very positive reaction internally with a high level of support expressed, including from those who currently have no caring responsibilities.
- The internal awareness-raising illustrates Aviva's commitment to supporting carers, and importantly gives permission to both carers and managers to take a person-centred, flexible approach to managing caring responsibilities and wellbeing.

7. Future Actions

- Continuing roll-out of the Carers Passport. This is a valuable tool which can be used by carers to facilitate a conversation about their needs. It can also be very helpful if carers change role or managers as their caring needs are recorded and are carried forward into a new role. You can find a template Carers Passport that you can use in the Appendix.
- Monitor and improve their management information on carers. For example, by using the annual employee survey to analyse the carer population's wellbeing and engagement.
- Keep talking to their carers network to ensure the policy is fit for purpose.





APPENDIX

CARERS PASSPORT TEMPLATE

[Outline what the Carers Passport is, it's purpose and how it can be used]

This passport can be completed by any employee who has caring responsibilities which may impact their work at present, or in the future.

To get started, have a meeting with your line manager and/or HR representative. Record the conversation, the date and agreed outcomes in this document.

Who owns this document: _____

Who was involved in the conversation: _____

Date of meeting: _____

Notes / outcomes: _____

Review date: _____

What is the Carer Passport?

The Carers Passport is designed to support discussions between carers and line managers/HR on the support needed to balance work with caring. It aims to maximise the potential of each employee and remove any barriers to inclusion and progression at work.

Carers record who was involved in the conversation, when it happened and the agreed outcomes. A review would normally take place every six months but it can be more frequent if the carer's circumstances change.

The document should be kept confidential once completed and can be stored by the carer themselves.

More Carers Passport resources can be found on the Government sponsored [Carers Passports website](#)





RESOURCES

For Employers

Case study: [Supporting Carers at Aviva](#) BITC

Toolkit: [Supporting older workers through transitions](#)
BITC

Research and Policy: [Employers for Carers Resources](#) Employers
for Carers

Business case: [Why is supporting working carers so important now?](#)
Employers for Carers

Report: [Creating an enabling for carers in the workplace](#) CIPD

Report: [Supporting Working Carers: The Benefits to Families,
Business and the Economy](#) Carers in Employment Task and Finish
Group

Report: [Helping employers supporting working carers](#) The Work
Foundation

For Carers

Guide: [Balancing work and care: a carer's guide](#)
Skills for Care

Guide: [Your statutory rights in work](#) Carers UK

Toolkit: [Being heard: a guide to self-advocacy for carers](#)
Carers UK

Advice line: [Carers UK Advice line](#) | 0808 808 7777

Guide: [Looking after someone – information and support for carers](#)
Carers UK





REFERENCES

- 1 DWP and ONS (2017) Family Resources Survey 2015/16. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/600465/family-resources-survey-2015-16.pdf
- 2 Ibid
- 3 Ibid
- 4 Carers UK (2011) Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap. Available at: <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/caring-at-a-distance>
- 5 Carers UK (2018) Make Connections, Get Support. <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/make-connections-get-support>
- 6 ONS (2017) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/articles/unpaidcarersprovidesocialcareworth57billion/2017-07-10>
- 7 Employers for Carers: Business Case. Available at: <http://www.employersforcarers.org/membership/business-case>
- 8 DWP and ONS (2017) Family Resources Survey 2015/16. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/600465/family-resources-survey-2015-16.pdf
- 9 Ibid
- 10 Ibid
- 11 Employers for Carers: Business Case. Available at: <http://www.employersforcarers.org/membership/business-case>
- 12 Carers UK for Employers for Carers/Department of Health Task and Finish Group (2013) Employers Business Benefits Survey. Available at: <http://www.employersforcarers.org/resources/research/item/809-employers-business-benefits-survey>

- 13 DWP and ONS (2017) Family Resources Survey 2015/16. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/600465/family-resources-survey-2015-16.pdf
- 14 CIPD. 2014. Managing an age-diverse workforce. Available at: <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/diversity/age-diversity-insights-report>
- 15 CIPD and Westfield Health. 2016. Creating an enabling future for carers in the workplace <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/enabling-carers>
- 16 Employers for Carers and Carers UK (2015) Caring and isolation in the workplace <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/caring-and-isolation-in-the-workplace>
- 17 Carers UK (2018) State of caring 2018. Available at: <https://www.carersuk.org/images/Downloads/SoC2018/State-of-Caring-report-2018.pdf>
- 18 Ibid
- 19 Employers for Carers and Carers UK (2015) Caring and isolation in the workplace <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/caring-and-isolation-in-the-workplace>
- 20 Carers UK (2011) Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap. Available at: <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/caring-at-a-distance>
- 21 CIPD and Westfield Health. 2016. Creating an enabling future for carers in the workplace <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/enabling-carers>
- 22 Carers UK (2018) Make Connections, Get Support. <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/make-connections-get-support>
- 23 Carers UK (2011) Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap. Available at: <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/caring-at-a-distance>
- 24 Employers for Carers: Business Case. Available at: <http://www.employersforcarers.org/membership/business-case>

